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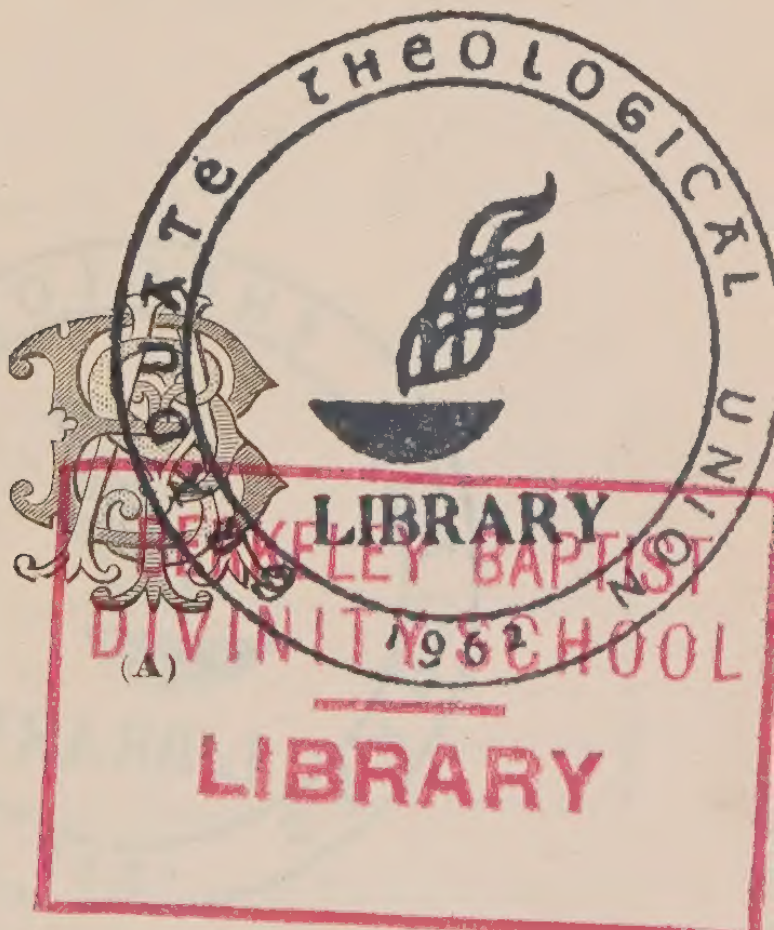

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THE

HOLY SUPPER:

IN HISTORY AND SCRIPTURE

BY

ALVAH HOVEY, D.D.

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THE HOLY SUPPER.

"For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death, till he come." 1 Cor. xi. 26.

"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." Jude 3.

"But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ." Eph. iv. 15.

Good men have often expressed their surprise at the existence of controversies among Christians in respect to the Lord's Supper. "How is it possible," they have asked, "for the followers of the Lamb to fall into strife about an ordinance so holy and heart-affecting, so expressive of perfect love and self-sacrifice in Christ, and so productive of gratitude, humility, and peace in his friends?"

Their surprise is by no means unaccountable; for a reverent contemplation of the holy supper is certainly fitted to turn the mind away from self to the Saviour—away from questions of de-

bate to the Source of life and peace; and a devout reception of the consecrated bread and wine is more likely than almost any other religious act to melt the heart and fill it with love to Christ and good-will to men.

Yet there is nothing in Christian faith or worship which has occasioned more controversies than the Lord's Supper; there is nothing which has been discussed with more earnestness by a greater number of men through a longer period of time. Serene souls have been fearfully agitated by inquiries respecting it; and men and women of saintly devotion have been delivered up to Satan and burnt at the stake, because they would not fall down and worship the consecrated host.

But when we look at the matter closely, it begins to appear that these controversies (if not their form and spirit) were inevitable—that nothing less than a miraculous economy of grace could have prevented them; for error was in the world when the gospel entered, and the consciences of men were darkened by that error when the gospel was first received. The "aftermath" of ages of sin could not be mown and removed at once. A miracle of illumination for the mind of every Christian during the first

millennium after the Pentecost would have been necessary, in order to prevent the old error from mingling with the new truth.

Moreover, it is easy to see that at no point would this error be more certain to reveal itself than in connection with the holy supper; for this ordinance represents the heart of the Christian religion, and anything which affects our view of the nature and working of the Christian religion will affect our view of the supper, while anything which disturbs our conception of the proper meaning and influence of the supper will disturb our conception of religion itself. Let the spirit of superstition set up its throne by the table of the Lord, and the shadow of its presence will darken every soul that ventures to approach; error at this point will be found more hurtful than at almost any other point, and therefore when it enters here there can be no worthy peace until it is expelled. The history of Christendom for more than a thousand years testifies to the truth of my words, and a brief notice of the opinions that have been entertained by large bodies of Christians will prove that the differences between them have been grave.

Controversies in respect to the Lord's Supper have arisen from differences of belief as to the

real substance of the consecrated bread and wine, as to the proper function of these elements or of the supper itself, and as to the relation of the supper to Christian baptism and the churches of Christ.

I. *As to the real substance of the consecrated bread and wine.* There are four distinguishable views in respect to the holy supper: The Romanist believes that the substance of the bread and wine is changed at the moment of priestly consecration into the very substance of the body and blood of Christ. Though the elements appear to be what they were before—form, color, taste, and nutritive power remaining unchanged—the invisible underlying essence is wholly different, being now the substance of that holy human nature which was derived from the Virgin Mary and offered upon the cross, and with which is for ever united the Divine Word. The change by which all this is wrought has been called *transubstantiation*. The Lutheran believes that the bread and wine are not themselves changed by the act of consecration, but that in and with and under them are truly present the very body and blood of Christ; or, in other words, that the whole human nature of Jesus is really united with the bread and wine, so that

both these exist together, one invisible and the other visible, and both are distributed to the communicants. This doctrine has been called *consubstantiation*. The strict follower of Calvin believes that the bread and wine are not themselves changed by consecration, but that the body of Christ is present in the elements, *dynamically*, instead of really or physically, through the mediation of the Holy Spirit, and that by "a miracle, transcending both nature and our understanding, Christ's life is made common to us with himself, and his flesh given to us as aliment." And the follower of Zwingli believes that the consecrated bread and wine are simply *emblems*, vividly presenting Christ crucified to believing souls as the true object of faith and source of life, thus assisting them to receive him with growing confidence and love.

But a close scrutiny of the four views which have been stated makes it evident that, in respect to the substance of the consecrated bread and wine, they may be reduced to two—the Romanist view on the one hand, and the Protestant view on the other—the former declaring that the substance of bread and wine is miraculously changed by the act of priestly consecration into the substance of the Lord's body, and the other

declaring that the substance of the bread and wine remains the same after consecration that it was before. Which of these views is correct? This is not a merely curious or speculative question, but a living and practical one, destined to grow in importance until the conflict between a priestly and an evangelical theory of true religion is settled in our land.

What then does the Romanist urge in support of his view? Principally, the following considerations:

First, that it is taught by the Holy Catholic Church; and by "the Holy Catholic Church" he means the Church of Rome, as represented by its councils and especially by the pope. For him the voice of the church is the voice of God—a voice which interprets both Scripture and tradition with infallible sagacity, and which denies to the Christian people any right of private judgment in respect to either. Inasmuch, therefore, as the Council of Trent and the supreme pontiff have pronounced the doctrine of transubstantiation true, it must be accepted by every loyal Roman Catholic without gainsaying or doubt; for the decision of a general council or of the pope in favor of any doctrine is an all-sufficient reason for believing it.

Secondly, that it has been taught by the church in all ages. By an easy and natural process of interpreting, according to his own view, both the scriptural statements and the indefinite expressions of certain early Christian writers, a Romanist may prove that his own view has always prevailed among Christians. He will see in the supposed words of Ignatius, condemning those who "do not confess that the Eucharist is the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ which suffered for our sins" (*Ad Smyr.*, c. 9), and exhorting others "to break one loaf, which is a medicine of immortality, an antidote of dying" (*Ad Eph.*, c. 20), decisive proof that transubstantiation was taught at the beginning of the second century; and in the words of Justin Martyr: "We use these not as common bread and common drink; but like as Jesus Christ our Redeemer was made flesh through the word of God, and took upon him flesh and blood for our redemption, so we are taught that the nutriment blessed by the word of prayer, from which our flesh and blood are nourished by transformation, is the flesh and blood of the incarnate Jesus" (*Apol. I.*, 66); in these words he will find an explicit statement of his favorite doctrine near the middle of the second century. But an

impartial scholar who is familiar with the writings of Ignatius and Justin will not be confident as to the precise meaning of their words in the present case. By a similar process, the Romanist will discover in other records far more evidence of the antiquity and general currency of his doctrine than really exists; yet it is true that from the beginning of the sixth century onward the current of religious thought among Christians flowed mainly toward the doctrine of a real change of the elements by consecration into the very body of Christ, and that in the ninth century this doctrine was distinctly formulated and taught by the Papal Church. From that time until the days of Wycliffe, the Romanist may justly claim that transubstantiation was generally believed.

Thirdly, that it is taught by the words of Christ, for a Romanist may appeal to Scripture when his private judgment of its meaning agrees with the interpretation of his church; and, according to the First Gospel, Jesus, having taken a loaf and blessed it, broke the same and gave it to his disciples, saying, "*Take, eat; this is my body.*" So, too, having taken a cup and given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "*Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new covenant*,

which is shed for many for the remission of sins." The expressions, "This is my body" and "This is my blood," are held by the Romanist to be literal and exact statements of fact—the bread of the loaf and the wine of the cup being converted into Christ's body and blood during the utterance of these sentences; and this interpretation is supposed to be proved correct by the Saviour's language as recorded in the sixth chapter of John: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

Fourthly, that it is justified by the record of analogous miracles. These miracles may be regarded as preparing the way for the ever-repeated miracle of the supper, so that too great a strain might not be put upon the faith of believers by the doctrine of transubstantiation. The helpful miracles referred to are the changing of Lot's wife into a pillar of salt, the changing of the rod of Moses into a serpent, and the changing of water into wine at the marriage of Cana. In the light of these events it is said to be credible that a thousand priests, serving at

a thousand altars, should pronounce, at the same moment, words that are followed by a thousand miracles, converting the substance of bread and wine into the actual body and blood of the Redeemer.

What, then, does the Protestant say in reply to these statements, and in support of his own view?

First, that the Papal Church is by no means infallible. It may fall into error as readily as any other body of Christians. For the Pope of Rome is in no true sense the vicar of Christ on earth. He is not even the successor of Peter in the Roman See. For a careful examination of all the evidence renders it doubtful whether Peter the apostle ever preached at all in Rome, and almost certain that he did not found the church in that city. But were it granted that late in life he visited the capital of the Roman world and suffered martyrdom there, there would still be wanting the first particle of evidence (*a*) that he ever had any supremacy over the other apostles or over the church universal, (*b*) that he ever had any right to name his successor in office, (*c*) that he ever assigned his office to the Bishop of Rome, or (*d*) that he ever commissioned any man or body of men to transmit his alleged

supremacy from bishop to bishop until the end of time. It is therefore plain that the first and principal reason which the Romanist pleads in favor of transubstantiation is unworthy of confidence. The voice of the pope, which is the voice of his church, cannot be received as the voice of Christ.

Secondly, that the papal doctrine on this subject has been controverted by able and good men from its first appearance until now. If the earliest traces of it may be discovered in the writings of Ambrose of Milan, it is certain that he sometimes makes use of language inconsistent with this doctrine, and that some of his greatest contemporaries, as Augustine, approved a different view. Moreover, when transubstantiation was clearly stated and elaborately defended in the ninth century, it met with strenuous opposition. Yet the times were in its favor, the liturgical formulas of the church appeared to sanction it, the papal magnates pronounced it true, and those who refused to accept it were soon denounced as heretics worthy of death. But probably it was at no time believed by all true Christians. If controversy was silenced by fear, thought was in some measure free. Indeed, there were "reformers before the Reformation" who braved the power of Rome and re-

jected openly the doctrine of transubstantiation. At this vital point the judgment of Wycliffe was even sounder than that of Luther, and the earlier reformation that seemed to fail was more biblical than the one that prospered at a later day. In view of these facts, a Protestant may safely affirm that the doctrine of transubstantiation cannot stand the test of the maxim that "what has been believed always and everywhere and by all" is true; for this doctrine, once proposed, has been almost always and everywhere a subject of controversy.

Thirdly, that the Roman Catholic interpretation of Christ's words at the supper is incorrect. That interpretation assumes the literal sense of his words to be their true sense, and any other view of them to be unworthy of serious attention. But nothing is more evident than that a large part of the Saviour's teaching was couched in figurative language. Not to mention the parables, which were a distinctive feature in his method of instruction, he spoke of himself as the "Door of the sheep," as the "Good Shepherd," as the "Light of the world," as the "Way to the Father," as the "Resurrection," as the "True Vine," and as the "Sower of the good seed." His abundant use of figurative speech in other

connections warns us, therefore, against assuming that his words at the supper must be taken in their literal sense.

Consider also the scene. The Saviour is there with his disciples, having flesh and blood as real and palpable as their own. His body was still a natural body, subject to hunger and thirst and weakness and limitation, like their own bodies. With hands like theirs, though holy, he broke the bread and gave to every one of them a portion, saying, "Take, eat; this is my body." Did they suppose that the whole body of their Lord was in every piece of the loaf distributed? Did they imagine that his body, though living and complete as he sat there in their presence at the head of the table, was also at the same moment the real substance of the bread they were eating? If he had never spoken a parable or used a figure of speech in their hearing, this would be deemed a scarcely credible view; and it is utterly incredible when we call to mind the way in which they had been taught by him.

Besides, the Romanist does not even interpret the words of Jesus literally. His attempt to do this is a failure. For the Lord said, "This (loaf, or bread) *is* my body," not, this *becomes* my body, or *is changed* into my body. Yet the latter, not

the former, would have been a literal expression of the papal doctrine. A strict interpretation makes the Saviour affirm that the broken bread, as bread, is his body; and this is just what the Romanist denies when teaching that the substance of the bread is changed into another substance—to wit, the very body of Christ.

Moreover, the Lutheran doctrine, that the body of Christ is truly *in* and *with* the bread which is distributed, is no less inconsistent with the literal sense of his word; for instead of saying, as he would naturally have done if the Lutheran doctrine were true, "*In* this is my body," he said, "This is my body."

Fourthly, that there is no scriptural account of similar miracles. There is not a scrap of sacred testimony that substance and attributes do not always faithfully answer to each other in the effects wrought by miracle. When Lot's wife became a pillar of salt, is there a particle of evidence that the substance of the pillar was salt whilst its attributes were those of flesh and blood? Or when the rod of Moses became a serpent and he fled before it, is there any hint of its properties being still those of a lifeless stick, while its substance was transmuted into that of a living serpent? Or when the water

was made wine in Cana, does the narrative permit us to believe that it retained the color and taste of water while its innermost substance was wine? We answer, Nay. The Scriptures never represent God as producing so monstrous and contradictory a thing as one substance having the qualities of another substance. They offer us no type of a change in the world of sense that mocks the evidence of sense.

Fifthly, that transubstantiation involves the unscriptural doctrine of a continual repetition of the sacrifice of Christ until the end of time. For according to this theory his body is given and his blood poured out whenever the supper is properly observed. But such a theory disregards the plain decision of Scripture. For the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews testifies that "such an high priest became us, holy, harmless, undefiled, who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins, then for the people's: for this he did once (*i. e.* once for all) when he offered himself" (vii. 26, 27); that "by his own blood he entered in once (for all) into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption" (ix. 12); that "now once (for all) at the end of the ages has he been manifested for the putting away of sin by the sacrifice

of himself" (ix. 26); that "we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once (for all)," (x. 10); and that "after he offered *one sacrifice* for sins, sat down for ever on the right hand of God; from henceforth waiting till his enemies become his footstool. For by one offering he has perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (x. 12, 13). And with these declarations before us it seems almost profane to speak of the sacrifice of the mass as a real and effectual, though bloodless, repetition of the sacrifice on Calvary.

Sixthly, that the Protestant interpretation of Christ's words at the last supper is obvious and correct; the simplest form of that interpretation regards the bread and wine as emblems of the flesh and blood of Christ, and according to this interpretation the words, "This is my body," really signify, "This means my body," or, still more exactly, "This represents my body." Such a use of the neuter verb is not uncommon at the present time. Thus a man opens his album of photographs here and there, and showing it to his friends, says, "This is John Bunyan; this is Edward Livingstone; this is Martin Luther"—meaning only that the several photographs represent the persons named. The same phraseology

occurs many times in the Old Testament; thus, Joseph, interpreting the dreams of Pharaoh, said, "The seven good kine are seven years, and the seven good ears are seven years," not meaning that the kine and the ears are periods of time, but that they represent certain annual periods, and they were no doubt chosen to represent or symbolize those periods, because the years in question were to be distinguished by "fat ears" and "fat kine." Another example may be taken from the thirty-seventh chapter of Ezekiel: "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel," meaning that the dry bones which the prophet had just seen coming together, and being clothed with flesh, in the valley of vision, were intended to symbolize or represent the entire people of Israel.

From the New Testament we offer but a single example. Interpreting his own *parable*, wherein he had likened the kingdom of heaven to a man who sowed good seed in his field, into which an enemy came by night and sowed tares, Jesus said unto his disciples, "He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; the field is the world; the good seed, these are the children of the kingdom; the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil, the

harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels;" and what he means can be neither more nor less than this: That the sower of the good seed in the parable represents the Son of man in the kingdom of heaven; that the field of the one represents the world of the other; that good seed in the one represents the children of the kingdom in the other; that the tares represent the children of the wicked one; that the enemy who sowed them represents the devil; that the harvest of the parable represents the end of this æon, or dispensation; and that the reapers represent the angels. This, in simple prose, is the explanation which the Lord gives of the different parts of his parable. One thing is said to be another, because it is the sign or emblem of it, and the same is true of Christ's language when he instituted the holy supper. In saying, "This is my body; This is my blood," he only said (for nothing else could his words have meant to his disciples), This loaf represents my body, and This cup represents my blood. I give them to you as emblems, memorials of my dying love, of the atonement which I am about to make. They will remind you of what I am to your souls; of the relation which my death bears to your life.

From this glance at the controversy about the substance of the bread and wine after consecration, I conclude that it will never cease until truth silences error. The vigilant power which has its seat in Rome is gazing wistfully toward the West, and will spare no effort to gain control of our people. It is not, then, a case for indifference or compromise on our part, but for victory or shame. It is our duty to read with close attention the signs of the time, and to gird up the loins of our mind for the conflict which rises before us; but there is no occasion to fear: He that is against God and his truth will fall; but he that is with them and for them will stand.

Again, there has been much controversy—

II. *As to the real function of the consecrated elements in the holy supper.* How do the bread and wine benefit the spiritual life of the communicants? Is it by being united with that life in some real and physical, though supersensible, way, by means of eating and drinking these elements? This appears to be involved in both the Romanist doctrine of transubstantiation and the Lutheran doctrine of consubstantiation; for among the canons of the Council of Trent is this one: "If any one saith that Christ given in the Eucharist is eaten spiritually only, and not

also sacramentally and really, let him be anathema." And to the question, "When the wicked receive (the Eucharist unworthily), do they . . . receive the body and blood of Christ?" the answer given by an approved Catechism is this: "Yes; because Jesus is present in the Eucharist independently of the faith of the receiver; but he who receives unworthily eats and drinks judgment to himself, because he does not discern what is due to the body of the Lord . . . This reason is also an invincible proof of the real presence, and the real and corporeal manducation of Christ in the Eucharist." These statements must signify that the bread and wine, when converted into the glorified but real nature of Christ, are actually united by a mysterious process, dependent on physical eating and drinking, with the essential life of the communicants, so that Christ is in them and they in Christ.

Although the proper Lutheran doctrine denies any change in the elements as the effect of consecration, it affirms the real presence of Christ's glorified body in and with those elements. Thus Luther in his "Shorter Catechism" answers the question, "What is the sacrament of the altar?" by saying, "It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine;"

and the thought which he intends to express is thus explained by the Formula of Concord: "We believe, teach, and confess that in the Lord's Supper the body and blood of Christ are truly and substantially present, and that they are truly distributed and taken together with the bread and wine;" also, "We believe, teach, and confess that the body and blood of Christ are taken with the bread and wine, not only spiritually, through faith, but also by the mouth, . . . but after a spiritual and heavenly manner." In view of these statements, and of the attitude of Luther toward the doctrine of the Swiss Reformers on this subject, it is plain to me that he deemed it the special function of the Lord's Supper to unite the real but glorified nature of Christ in some mysterious way with the nature of the believer. The bread and wine are conceived of as being in some sense physical media for introducing the invisible nature of Jesus into the life of saints on earth. They are more than signs—more than vehicles of *truth:* they hold in themselves the actual body of Christ, and as they are eaten, and because they are eaten, the recipients become the body of Christ—his flesh and his bones.

Looking, then, at this one point, the function

of the supper, or the elements in the supper, we perceive a strong resemblance between the doctrine of the Lutheran and the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church.

It is more difficult to state the views of Calvin on this point; but Dr. Schaff says: "He taught that believers, while they receive with their mouths the visible elements, receive also by faith the spiritual realities signified and sealed thereby—namely, the benefit of the atoning sacrifice on the cross and the life-giving virtue of Christ's glorified humanity in heaven, which the Holy Ghost conveys to the soul in a supernatural manner." Or, in the words of Dr. Nevin: "The living energy, the vivific virtue, as Calvin styles it, of Christ's flesh, is made to flow over into the communicant, making him more and more one with Christ himself, and thus more and more an heir of the same immortality that is brought to light in his person." This doctrine has been called "an ingenious compromise between the realism and mysticism of the Lutheran and the idealism and spiritualism of the Zwinglian theory."

What, then, is the Zwinglian theory as to the proper function of the elements and the supper? It is that the elements, strictly speaking, are

nothing but emblems and memorials of the dying Saviour; that they serve to recall and to impress on the heart the great and central doctrines of atonement and faith; that they remind the soul, by a sort of visible speech and by an act of confession, of its dependence evermore on the sacrifice of Christ for the nourishment of its new life, its faith, and its love.

According to this view, eternal life is not given to men by a physical communication of either the divine or the human nature of Christ. No such communication is necessary, for eternal life may be described as a right state of the heart and a right direction of the will toward the Supreme Ruler, who is also the Supreme Good, and toward all subordinate beings. Eternal life is conscious harmony in feeling and action with God through Christ, and with the spiritual universe as far as it is freely subject to him. In support of this, we appeal to the words of the Saviour in his prayer after instituting the holy supper: "This is eternal life, that they (should) know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." No doubt, a part of the Holy Spirit's work consists in preparing men to receive the truth in opening their hearts to the message of grace; but there is no reason to sup-

pose that this is done by imparting to them the physical though glorified nature of Christ. What a sinner needs is not some addition to the substance of his being, but some influence that will give a new direction and movement to his spiritual life, to his rational, moral, and religious nature; and what a believer needs is not the perpetual infusion of a glorified human nature into his being, but an increase of his faith and love through a vivid presentation of Christ and his work. Hence the sanctifying power of the ordinances is due to the Christian truth which they strikingly represent, and to the obedience which reinforces the influence of that truth, but not to any mystic function whereby they conduct into souls a divine energy or substance that can never be discerned by any power of intuition or of sensation.

It will then be seen that the views which I have described are radically opposed to each other. They rest on wholly different conceptions of the change effected by the Spirit of God at regeneration, and of the way in which that change is accomplished. And they involve ideas of the divine method of sanctification which are plainly discordant and irreconcilable. According to the former view, a mystical union

with the glorified nature of Christ is the all-important feature of the new life; but according to the latter, a moral and voluntary union with the mind and will of Christ is the all-important feature of that life. According to the one view, the water of baptism and the bread and wine of the supper, when duly consecrated, are, by the appointment of God, and not by reason of any fitness in themselves for this particular function, the *media* or conditions of physical union with Christ, and so of growth in grace; but according to the other view, baptism and the Lord's Supper, element and act combined, are solemn and self-interpreting *confessions* of Christian truth, bringing that truth home to the heart with singular power, and thus contributing in a perfectly intelligible way to the increase of holy affections and purity of life. The former or sacramental theory is sustained by great historical churches in the East and in the West, and partially endorsed by Protestant churches of the highest character in Europe and America. No efforts will be spared to diffuse it among the people; no argument that can be adduced in its support will be overlooked. Whatever has been said in favor of transubstantiation, or the real presence, will be urged in defence of this theory

also; and much besides. But if those who adopt the latter, or moral, theory of the function of Christian ordinances are faithful to their high calling and to the light which is given them, the issue of the controversy cannot be doubtful; for truth is stronger than error — pure truth is stronger than truth mingled with error—and the zeal with which millions are now searching the Scriptures augurs well for the purity of religious belief in days to come. Yet victory will not perch on the banner of careless or timid soldiers. If we can say with the apostle John, "This is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith," it is because our faith has not been a mere intellectual *credo*, but a living and fruit-bearing trust. Such faith we need for every conflict with error; and such faith will give to us success in opposing the view which ascribes a mystic sacramental virtue to the bread and wine, as well as in maintaining the view which ascribes to them the spiritual influence of truth solemnly expressed and confessed.

And I attribute the highest importance to baptism and the Lord's Supper as confessions of Christian truth and as acts of Christian obedience. As confessions of Christian truth they have been seriously undervalued; for they repre-

sent the central facts and doctrines of our religion in a language which is readily understood by men of every nation and of every age, and if rightly observed they would do more than all the creeds of Christendom to preserve unchanged in the minds of men the cardinal truths revealed by Christ. By rejecting the sacramental view we do not, then, depreciate the value of Christian baptism or of the holy supper. On the contrary, we assign to them an office of the highest dignity.

Finally, in these latter days there has been much controversy—

III. *As to the Relation of the Lord's Supper to baptism and the Churches of Christ.* For it has been affirmed, with great confidence, that each of the Christian ordinances is independent and complete, having no need of the other, and, with equal confidence, that each of them is closely related to the other, the holy supper being in fact complementary to baptism. Again, it has been said that any number of believers, small or great, and without regard to church connection, may observe the holy supper at will. It has also been said that only bishops or priests have a right to administer this ordinance and to determine who are worthy to receive it. And,

finally, it has been said that the Lord's Supper is neither a private, nor a social, nor a priestly ordinance, but one that should be observed by the churches of Christ as churches.

These differences of belief rest in some measure on different views in respect to the proper function of the ordinances. Our discussion of the latter point may therefore prove to be a suitable introduction to the notice we must take of the former. For if the holy supper was intended to do no more than to symbolize and promote the union of all who trust in Christ, it might be possible to conceive of this ordinance as isolated and independent, doing its whole work without regard to baptism. But if it was intended to serve as a channel through which the substance or the virtue of Christ's glorified humanity should be conveyed into the nature of persons already regenerated by baptism, such a view would be impossible. Or if the holy supper was meant to be a solemn ritual confession of one part of a system of vitally coherent truth, while baptism was meant to be a no less solemn confession of another part of the same system, the ordinances must have a natural relation to each other, and the supper may well be considered the complement of baptism. To state the

case more exactly: if the Lord's Supper represents and confesses a relation of believers to Christ which always and necessarily follows the relation which is represented by baptism, then, in order to a lucid exhibition of the truth by these rites, must the Lord's Supper follow baptism. To reverse the order of observance would be to give a representation of impossible facts. If spiritual life and growth and refreshment are always consequent upon spiritual birth, this fact must be recognized in a sound and clear confession of the truth.

But is there any biblical ground for the belief that Christian ordinances were intended by the Lord to serve as open confessions of Christian truth? This question deserves a careful answer.

Looking first at Christian baptism, I find several passages of the New Testament which appear to me to teach either the sacramental or the confessional theory of this rite. In other words, they seem to teach that it is the office of baptism to do one of two things—either to ingenerate a new spiritual life, or to represent and confess the generation and commencement of that life; either to be the means of effecting a saving transition from darkness to light, from unbelief to faith, from hatred to love, or to represent and declare

that blessed transition. Thus, for example, Paul writes to the Corinthian disciples: "For in one Spirit are we all baptized into one body" (1 Cor. xii. 13); and to the Romans: "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried, therefore, with him through the baptism into his death; that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life" (vi. 3, 4); and to the Galatians: "Ye are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus; for as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ" (iv. 26, 27). With these expressions may be compared the words of Ananias to Saul: "Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on his name" (Acts xxii. 16, true text); and the words of Peter on the day of Pentecost: "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins" (Acts ii. 38).

Now, it is evident that these passages represent baptism as having for some reason a very close connection with the origin of the new life and the forgiveness of sins. And if they were the only passages of the New Testament bearing on the subject, it would be natural to find in them

the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. But they are not the only passages bearing on the subject, and must, therefore, be studied in the light of other statements. If, then, we bear in mind (*a*) that there is no account in the sacred record of any person who was made a true believer by submitting to baptism, (*b*) that there are accounts of some who proved themselves to be in the gall of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity after baptism, (*c*) that thousands were baptized in those days because of their faith in Christ and joyful reception of the gospel, (*d*) that Paul pronounced the preaching of the cross, in distinction from administering baptism, to be the power of God unto them that were being saved, (*e*) that he professed to have begotten the saints in Corinth through the gospel, though he had baptized almost none of them, and (*f*) that the sacramental theory appears to be alien to the whole history and spirit of the first age,—we shall be constrained to reject this theory, and look for another interpretation of the passages in question.

That other interpretation is at hand. The close connection between the new birth and the rite of baptism is due to the fact that the latter is a solemnly prescribed confession of the former.

It recalls by a ceremony of wonderful significance the instant of regeneration, and testifies that the new life of the subject began in a great spiritual change, by which he passed from darkness and unbelief into light and trust, from impenitence and condemnation into repentance and forgiveness, and from service and partnership with Satan into the service and fellowship of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. This is a clear and ample explanation of the passages which are alleged in favor of the sacramental theory, while it brings them into perfect accord with all the other statements of inspired men.

Let us apply it to the narrative in the first verses of the nineteenth chapter of Acts, where Luke describes the only case of rebaptism mentioned in the New Testament. Through the upper regions Paul came to Ephesus and found certain persons who are called "disciples," and who, therefore, though very ignorant, probably knew the grace of God. Upon inquiry the apostle ascertained that they had been baptized into John's baptism, perhaps by some poorly-instructed disciple of the Baptist, for they had no knowledge of the Holy Spirit, if, indeed, they had any of Christ Jesus. Paul, therefore, gave them the instruction which they needed, and then

baptized them, after the usual manner, into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; or, as epitomized by Luke, "into the name of the Lord Jesus." This was an adequate confession of their renewal by the Holy Spirit and of their entrance upon a life of loyal obedience to the Triune God. Taking this view of their history and religious state, we say that they had previously entered upon a life of faith *essentially* Christian, yet probably without much knowledge of the personal Christ, and certainly without any knowledge of the Holy Spirit given by him, and that now, with a clear view of the Divine Source and End of their religious life, they were called to make an intelligent confession of what they had darkly confessed before. The incident shows that Christian baptism symbolizes and confesses not merely a spiritual renovation, but a spiritual renovation by which the subject of it enters upon a life of conscious obedience and allegiance to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Again, it may be seen that the personal reference and devotion, as well as the origin, of the new life, are avowed in baptism, by looking at two expressions of Paul in his First Epistle to the Corinthians. In one he says that "all our fathers were baptized unto (or into) Moses, in the cloud

and in the sea," and in the other he asks: "Was Paul crucified for you? Or were ye baptized into the name of Paul?" Such language is scarcely intelligible unless baptism is a confessional act, an oath of allegiance to the Lord. (*Tertullian*).

And the same is true of the Lord's Supper; it is an oft-repeated confession of Christ crucified as the object and aliment of saving faith. Hence the apostle says, "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye declare the Lord's death till he come." From the connection of this with the preceding verse, it is evident that the apostle regarded a proper observance of the supper as a proclamation of the death of Christ, and therefore as an act bringing him to mind at the moment when his life and work and glory on earth culminated.

But from the circumstance that Christians by eating the bread and drinking the wine declare the death of Christ we are not to infer that they merely proclaim the historical fact of his death. This is certainly embraced in the significance of their act; but much more than this also. If this were all, I do not see why the bread should be eaten or the wine drunk. The breaking of one and the pouring out of the other would suf-

fice. But this is not all; for while the act of eating the bread and drinking the wine commemorates the death of Christ, it commemorates that death as closely related to the spiritual life of the communicants; or, more exactly, if we let the rite speak its own language, it represents the continued and vigorous life of those who partake as dependent on a continued apprehension of that death. It declares, in a language more impressive than any form of words, that every man who would be strong for holy service must take into his soul the dying Saviour by continuous acts of faith, must find peace and strength and courage in him, and must never cease to bear in mind the Lamb of Calvary as his Redeemer, his helper, and his joy.

Now, in looking at baptism and the Lord's Supper as confessions of truth, it will be seen that their full and right meaning is at once clouded and confused, if not fatally perverted, by changing the order of their administration. To use the forcible words of another: "If the things symbolized stand to each other in a necessary relation as first and second, and if that relation is positively declared and strenuously enforced in the New Testament as a truth to be proclaimed and defended, then we are compelled

to believe that the Lord, who established the symbols in this order, and meant each to have a meaning separately, also meant them to have a meaning in their sequence. In other words, he meant *their very order* to be symbolical." As baptism, therefore, symbolizes the new birth; and the Lord's Supper, the believer's participation in Christ, so the precedence of baptism to the Lord's Supper symbolizes the necessary precedence—the prerequisiteness of regeneration to such participation in Christ. The language of baptism is: If any man be in Christ he is a new creature; he has risen again to newness of life; he is born again. The language of the Lord's Supper is: Every member of the kingdom of God is dependent upon Christ for spiritual life, and strength, and hope. The language of the order of the two ordinances is: "*Except* a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

Now, this view of the ordinances, that they represent and attest and confess the central facts of our holy religion as taught by its Founder, renders it for ever impossible to reverse the order of their administration to believers without taking from them a part of their original and high significance; and to do this on principle and by

arrangement would be as great a wrong as to remove from the sacred record a part of its teaching.

In confirmation of the view which we have presented, that the Lord's Supper should follow and not precede baptism, appeal may also be made to the common judgment and practice of Christians from the first age until now. From the New Testament it plainly appears that baptism was the first ritual expression of the new life. Not to insist upon the circumstance that John, the harbinger of Christ, baptized those who repented and confessed their sins, it is affirmed by the author of the Fourth Gospel that, in his early ministry, Jesus "made and baptized more disciples than John"—a statement which points to baptism as connected with the very beginning and profession of discipleship. To the same purport are the words of the great commission, in which faith and baptism are closely united—so closely, in fact, that we have no right to insert between them the Lord's Supper. And when the apostles after the first Pentecost proceeded to obey the great commission, they promptly administered baptism to those who manifested repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; and in no instance is there the

faintest shadow of evidence that the Lord's Supper was offered to disciples before they were baptized. Evidence to the contrary lies on the very face of the narratives, and it is plain that the apostles interpreted the great commission as putting baptism at the commencement of the Christian course and before any other ritual act.

Justin Martyr, writing before the middle of the second century, uses the following language in respect to the holy supper: "This food is called Eucharist, of which it is lawful for no other person to partake than one who believes what we teach to be true, and who has been bathed in the bath for the remission of sins and unto regeneration, and who so lives as Christ enjoined." Justin Martyr was a well-informed Christian, a traveller, a teacher, acquainted with believers in Asia Minor and in Rome, if not in all parts of the empire, and his first Apology, from which I have extracted the words just read, contains the fullest and most trustworthy account of Christian rites and worship that has come down to us from the first half of the second century.

But all the other notices of the Lord's Supper agree in the matter before us with his. No unbaptized persons were admitted to the Lord's

table. For a considerable time no others were allowed even to witness the celebration of the Eucharist; candidates for baptism and members under discipline, together with all unbelievers, were dismissed from the assembly before the elements were distributed to the faithful; and this is specially noteworthy, because the custom of administering baptism only once a year had become nearly universal as early as the fourth century, and therefore converts, however satisfactory the evidence of their faith in Christ, were often required to wait almost a year without admission to the Lord's Supper, because they were yet unbaptized. There were controversies, moreover, in the third century about the validity of baptism when administered by so-called heretics. The churches of Asia Minor and of North Africa rejected baptism among heretics as altogether null, and required converts from heresy to receive the rite at the hands of an orthodox administrator before enjoying their fellowship; and all the churches were agreed in holding that this ordinance must precede admission to the holy supper. All maintained that it marked the beginning of the new life.

Nor did the great Reformation under Luther, Calvin, Knox, and others produce any change in

this respect. Christians continued to believe that baptism was prerequisite to the Lord's Supper. Indeed, so perfectly united were they on this point, and so clearly did their practice of infant baptism and their definitions of this ordinance fix its place before the supper, that they found no occasion for treating the matter separately in their creeds. Of late there have been single churches that have yielded to a different theory, but I am not aware that any Pedobaptist denomination fails even now to insist upon baptism as antecedent in the order of nature and of time to the Lord's Supper. Not one of these denominations has issued any creed or catechism inconsistent with the following extract from the Catechism of the Church of Geneva, written by Calvin: "Is it enough to receive both [the sacraments] once in a lifetime? It is enough so to receive baptism, which may not be repeated. It is different with the supper. What is the difference? By baptism the Lord adopts us and brings us into his church, so as thereafter to regard us as part of his household. After he has admitted us among the number of his people he testifies by the supper that he takes a continual interest in nourishing us."

Only the Anabaptists, who in the time of the

Reformation rejected infant baptism, could have any practical motive to differ from the general belief, and the Anabaptists were denounced and persecuted as pestilent heretics, "a nefarious herd," dangerous to both church and state. Hence, I do not think it likely that for some time they had much occasion to ponder the question whether they ought or ought not to invite to the Lord's Supper persons whom they held to be unbaptized. In process of time, however, as their Christian integrity began to be conceded by others, those who rejected infant sprinkling, and who soon learned to reject the sprinkling of adults also, were led by a longing for ritual fellowship with other believers to consider this question; and some of them, especially in England, came to the strange conclusion that baptism need not precede (or follow) communion at the Lord's table. Yet many of these admitted that in the natural and orderly sequence of Christian duties the supper follows baptism, and that a disregard of this sequence can only be justified by the errors into which great bodies of Christians have fallen.

Permit me to doubt the soundness of this reason, for one erroneous practice is no good foundation for another. If we are convinced that

men have set aside an ordinance of the Christian religion, though by mistake and with no evil purpose, we must honor their integrity of heart, but deplore and condemn their action; and the only effectual way to condemn an error is to withhold from it the office and honor of truth. The only obvious and just method of contending against a corruption of Christianity is to refuse our sanction to that corruption—just as we endeavor to put what we believe to be a spurious coin out of circulation by pronouncing it bad and declining to receive it as if it were good. In saying this I assume that Christian baptism is a divinely-prescribed confession of truth by the immersion in water of a believer, into the name of the Triune God, and that a man's honest opinion that something else is baptism, or is just as good as baptism, does not make it so.

It appears, then, from the meaning and purpose of the Lord's Supper, from the practice of Christians under apostolic direction, and from the concurrent judgment of well-ordered churches since the first age, that the Lord's Supper is related to baptism as spiritual life is related to spiritual birth, or as consequent is related to antecedent. Let us not disturb this order. Let us not be moved, even by the reproaches of those

whom we honor and love, to mar the teaching of the holy ordinances committed to us! Let us stand firm in the simple truth, and wait with patience for the hour when more light on the subject of baptism shall bring Christians together at the point where they really differ.

The last matter to be considered is the relation of the holy supper to the churches of Christ. While the apostles lived this ordinance appears to have been observed, not by individual Christians at will, nor by irresponsible companies of believers, nor by persons under permission of the clergy or priesthood, but by the churches of Christ; and by churches of Christ I mean companies of baptized disciples banded together in some orderly way for the purpose of maintaining and propagating the Christian religion, of receiving and dismissing members, and of exercising discipline.

Such a company was the little band of disciples to which the supper was first administered. They had been summoned to his side by the Saviour's voice; they were his recognized and constant followers; they were under his special tuition and stood forth the champions of his cause; they were united in belief and action; and they were in the most real and practical sense a re-

sponsible community, separated from the world and associated in the service of Christ.

Such a company was the body of believers, with the apostles as a nucleus, to which those baptized on the day of Pentecost were added, and which is presently called a "church" by the sacred historian. But did not the Christians at Jerusalem, though baptized and under the regular superintendence of the apostles, "break bread from house to house," and thus celebrate the Eucharist as social circles without supervision of the church? There is no sufficient proof of this; for many of the best interpreters assert that the expression translated "from house to house" means "at their own house" of worship, instead of in the temple, where they were suffered to meet for prayer, but not, of course, for the administration of rites distinctively Christian. To administer the latter would have been sure to inflame the wrath of the Jews, and to make the courts of the Lord's house a theatre of strife and blasphemy. Hence, if they wished to act as a separate community, they had to meet in some place of their own. But even if the translation "from house to house" be retained, and we suppose that they met in different places, one or two of the apostles presiding over each

assembly, this as a provisional arrangement would not cause the supper to be esteemed a mere family or social rite. The narrative of Luke assumes, at the very least, that the sacred emblems were not carried to those out of the church, but were only given to the united brotherhood.

Such a company was that mentioned by Luke as meeting in Troas. "And on the first day of the week, when we were assembled to break bread, Paul preached unto them—about to depart on the morrow—and continued his speech until midnight." Every line of the narrative reminds us of an assembly of Christians. The meeting was held on the first day of the week, not on the Jewish sabbath, and Paul seems to have tarried seven days that he might be present. It is therefore commonly and reasonably assumed that they were accustomed to meet on that day for worship and the breaking of bread. Moreover, as Paul had visited Troas twice before, there is good reason to believe that, according to his custom in other places, he had organized a church and ordained elders over it in that city.

And such a company was that to which Paul addressed the First Epistle to the Corinthians, wherein is the fullest account of the Lord's Sup-

per to be found in the New Testament. And from this account we learn: (1) That the members of the Corinthian church were accustomed to "come together" in order to observe the Lord's Supper. No less than four times within half a chapter does the apostle connect their coming together in one place with the celebration of the Eucharist. (2) That they could not observe the Lord's Supper without coming together. "If any man hunger, let him eat at home." Many things could be done separately and at home, but it does not seem to have entered Paul's mind that the *Lord's Supper* could be thus eaten. (3) That they came together "in church" to observe the holy supper. The word "church" is applied in the New Testament to the whole company of believers in every age, or in the world or in a whole province (once), and to a local company, as that in Corinth. In the case before us it must be used in the latter and customary sense; for Paul could not speak of the Corinthian Christians as "coming together" in church universal. And when he asks, "Have ye not houses to eat and drink in? or despise ye the church of God?"—he means by the church of God the organized and responsible company of disciples in Corinth.

From this rapid glance at the New Testament it is plain that the Lord's Supper is a church ordinance.

And now, fathers and brethren, what ought we to do? The answer may be given in few words. Living in a period of change, when multitudes are becoming unsettled in belief, it would be a fatal mistake for us to imitate John Bunyan's "Mr. Facing-both-Ways." We must rather abide by the simple truth, keeping the ordinances as the Lord gave them to his people at the beginning, and leave with others the whole responsibility for any change they desire to make or to continue.

Let it be our aim to fulfil the apostle's word, "*Speaking the truth*"—a word which confessedly has a larger and deeper sense in the original than in our version; for whether it be translated, with Dr. Conant, "*holding the truth*," or with Dr. Noyes, "*holding to truth*," or with Dean Alford, "*being followers of truth*," it embraces the whole matter of loyal adhesion to Christian truth in word and conduct, and is the opposite of being children, tossed as waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine.

Our duty is not, then, an easy one to discharge. Nor is it likely to be always a pleasant one. For

those who hold and maintain Christian truth without wavering in a generation that has fallen into many errors must expect that some will be grieved, some annoyed, and some provoked at their courses. Yet it is none the less our duty, and, from the highest point of view, our blessed privilege, to stand fast in the truth and contend earnestly for the faith delivered once for all to the saints.

But this should be done in the spirit of *love*. It should be done not only because fidelity to Christ requires it, but also because good-will to mankind requires it, because there is nothing we can do for them so conducive to their highest welfare as to present to their minds the truth as it is in Jesus. And may the God of peace teach us all to hold the truth in love, and work in us all that which is well pleasing in his sight, until we come, in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ! Amen.

EVILS

OF

INFANT BAPTISM.

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EVILS OF INFANT BAPTISM.

"A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump."—*Gal.* v. 9.

IT cannot for a moment be doubted that the servants of Christ should honor and defend his truth. And I mean by "his truth," comprehensively, "the gospel of the kingdom." For the Saviour of men, in his ever memorable response to Pilate, spoke distinctly of his kingdom as being not of this world, not dependent on the sword for existence, or growth, or defence, and then added this significant statement: "To this end have I been born, and to this end have I come into the world, that I may bear witness to the truth." From which language, interpreted by the context, I infer that the kingdom of Christ

rests upon truth, and is to be enlarged and defended by faithfully manifesting the truth, that is to say, by declaring the facts, the principles, the laws, the duties, and the ends of that kingdom, or, to gather all into a single phrase, by preaching the gospel of the kingdom. Whatever Jesus taught, either by his own lips, or by the mouth of his apostles, is therefore embraced in the truth.

But is it necessary to oppose error in order to honor and defend truth? Must we protest in so many words against false doctrine, in order to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints?" These questions may be answered, no, and yes, according to circumstances and the points in debate. For consistent thinkers the establishment of a given truth is doubtless the overthrow of the opposite error. And this method of action has sometimes great advantages. It is often more effectual than any other, and always more agreeable. It may be safely chosen when the views in question are plainly and directly opposed to each other. Thus the doctrine of universal salvation may be completely demolished by proving that some of

our race reject the only means of salvation, and are lost forever; for that doctrine is a formulated denial of the final ruin of a single soul, and the simplest mind will see that it cannot be true, if any perish. But there are errors as to doctrine and duty which do not stand out in the light of day, each over against an opposite truth, and so sharply defined, so equally matched with that contrasted truth, that the reception of the one carries with it perforce a rejection of the other. Far oftener is error associated with truth, or clad in the garments of truth, and so able to deceive the unwary. Far oftener is it a tincture of evil permeating the mass of truth, like the leaven of which the apostle speaks in my text.

For it is agreed by the best interpreters that in this place leaven is an emblem of evil, that it symbolizes either teachers of error, or the error which they teach. I adopt the latter sense, as being more natural and obvious than the former; but if the former was intended by the apostle, the text is still pertinent to my theme—the "Evils of Infant Baptism,"—for false teachers do evil by means of the error which they diffuse. It is not their personal influence, their eloquence,

or their persuasiveness which, in and of itself, poisons and corrupts, but it is the false doctrine commended thereby. Silently, secretly, steadily, does this work its way through every particle of the lump, and though small in amount, effects a startling change in the quality and state of the whole. Judaism, sometimes represented in this epistle by circumcision, its initial rite, is here in the mind of Paul, and is denounced by him as leaven pervading the whole lump with evil. A small error it might have seemed to those who thought it an error; not a formal rejection of Christ, the Lord, but only a perpetuation of the type with the reality which it typified; only a clinging to the shadow as well as the substance which it outlined; only a retention of the carnal ordinance along with the law of life; only a commingling of the natural with the spiritual, of that which constituted one a Jew outwardly with that which constituted one a Jew inwardly, tending to obscure the truth and darken the mind—this it was, and only this, which the apostle looked upon as an error endangering the very life of a pure Christianity and church. Good as Judaism certainly had been in its own

day and for its appointed service, it was no more fit to be connected with a Christian church, than is the body of a worm to be united with the butterfly that has escaped from it, or the natural body of man to be joined with his glorified body; and every attempt to combine the two must result in harm to Christian doctrine and life.

A similar view must be taken of infant baptism. It has no natural place in the kingdom of Christ. Hence those who hold, in other respects, the apostolic doctrine as to that kingdom, find it the hardest task to justify this practice, and make it coalesce with the remaining elements of their creed. The farther one moves from the Papal Church towards the Apostolic, the more difficult does the comprehension of infant baptism become, and the more liable is it to be neglected as a practice of uncertain origin. The rite seems to be at home in the Papal Church, and everything else agrees so perfectly with it, that one is justified in surmising that infant baptism is, in fact, the "little leaven that has leavened the whole lump," the tincture of error which has corrupted every part of the system. But I must pass from this general

statement, and endeavor to point out with all fidelity, and at the same time with sincere good will to Christians of every name, some of the evils of infant baptism.

I. *Infant baptism takes away from the Christian ordinance a large part of its meaning.*

If the Papal theory of a mysterious, sacramental virtue in baptism is unworthy of confidence, and the efficacy of the rite, as a means of grace, depends largely upon the truth which it brings into the mind and heart, anything which weakens its significance must be an evil; and the greatness of the evil must correspond with the amount of truth thus ignored and lost.* Now, the Sacred Record shows that in the apostolic age, Christian baptism was a solemn profession of faith in Christ on the part of him who received it. For, in his letter to the Galatians, Paul says to the Christians of that province:

* The translator, reformer, and martyr, Tyndale, says of the sacraments: "There is none other virtue in them than to testify and exhibit to the senses and understanding the covenants and promises made in Christ's blood;" and, "where the sacraments or ceremonies are not rightly understood, there they be clearly unprofitable."—*Tulloch's Rational Theology in England*, etc., p. 41.

"Ye are all sons of God through the (your) faith in Christ Jesus. For all ye who were baptized into Christ did put on Christ." Here the apostle alleges the fact of their having put on Christ, by their own act, in baptism as an evidence of their faith in Christ, and so of their sonship to God. "Ye are all sons of God, for ye have all believed in Christ, and ye have all believed in Christ, for ye have all taken him solemnly to be your Lord and your life, by submitting to baptism. If your profession in this act was sincere, ye are truly identified with Christ by faith, and therefore are sons of God." The only alternative to this view of Paul's language, is one that makes it teach the doctrine of baptismal regeneration; for he could not have appealed to the fact of their baptism as an evidence of their faith, unless it was either the root or the fruit of faith, unless it either originated or attested faith; and I need not state to this assembly the reasons which require us to look upon the act of putting on Christ in baptism as an avowal of faith, rather than a production of it, for the first time, in the heart.

With this passage may be compared another, addressed by the apostle to Christians of his own day: "Know ye not, that all we who were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through our baptism into his death; that, like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life."

The translation which I have read is that of Dean Alford. A little further on they are exhorted to reckon themselves "to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus." In the baptismal symbol and profession they had died to sin, separating themselves formally from the love and service of it, even as Christ, their Lord, in another way and respect, had also died to sin, separating himself from its burden and curse forevermore. Their baptism was an act by which they renounced openly the service of Satan and accepted that of Christ. This was true of all the faithful in Rome; but it is not true of persons christened in infancy. Their own death to sin, their own entrance upon a new life, their own union with Christ cannot be ex-

pressed by an ordinance administered without their knowledge or consent.

In harmony with my interpretation of these two passages are the several notices of baptism in the Acts of the Apostles. When the hearers of Peter on the day of Pentecost gladly received his word, they were baptized, but not before. When the people of Samaria believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus, they were baptized, both men and women. When the Ethiopian eunuch listened to the same Evangelist proclaiming Jesus, and asked the privilege of putting on Christ by baptism, the rite was promptly administered. Saul of Tarsus was not baptized until he gave evidence of faith in the Lord Jesus; nor Cornelius until he received the gift of the Holy Spirit; nor Lydia until her heart was opened by the Lord to attend to the words of Paul; nor the jailer until he believed, and all his house. In every instance cited, baptism appears to have followed and attested faith in Christ; and I find no case recorded in the New Testament where this ordinance was not understood to be a declaration of such faith. Even

John's Baptism signified a change of mind,* an entrance upon a new and spiritual life, which had already brought forth its appropriate fruits. When, therefore, the rite of baptism is applied to infants, a large part, and it may be the most important part, of its meaning is lost; and if, as we all believe, it was divinely instituted to symbolize and emphasize certain great truths in "the gospel of the kingdom," it must be an evil and a sin to disavow, or even ignore, one half its original significance. If any man deems this language severe, let him weigh the following words from the last chapter of Revelation: "I testify to every one that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, that if any one shall add to them, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any one shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and out of the holy city." It must not be forgotten by us that the truth of God is sacred, whether expressed in words or in

* Μετάνοια, a strong and far-reaching word, applied only in the New Testament to a radical and spiritual change.

ordinances; and it is not in our power to say confidently that more evil is done by adding to that truth than by taking from it; by introducing rites not prescribed by the Founder of our religion, than by mutilating or misapplying those prescribed.

It is also proper for me to suggest that the application of baptism to infants not only takes away from the Christian rite a large part of its meaning, but that it tends to a change of the rite itself, by substituting affusion or sprinkling for immersion, and thus diminishing still further its original significance. While saying this, I do not forget the practice of the Greek Church, numbering so many millions, but I am satisfied, nevertheless, that the feebleness of infancy has had much to do in reconciling parents and pastors to what Cyprian calls "a compend, or abridgment," of this holy ordinance.* To this conviction I am brought by the nature of

* See *Cypriani Opera*, i. p. 197 (Gersdorf's ed.). "In sacramentis salutaribus necessitate cogente et Deo indulgentiam suam largiente totum credentibus conferunt divina compendia." Cyprian is here speaking of cases where "adspergi vel perfundi videntur *ægri*, cum gratiam dominicam consequuntur."

the case and the records of history, without appealing to the valid principle that deviation from apostolic example in one respect renders further deviation comparatively easy.

But does the substitution of affusion or sprinkling for baptism lessen its significance? Beyond a doubt this is to be answered in the affirmative; for, according to the obvious meaning of Paul's language in the sixth chapter of Romans, baptism represents vividly the death, burial, and resurrection of the candidate, his dying, through faith in the death of Christ, to sin and the law, and his rising through faith to a new life unto God, and free obedience. But, quite apart from this inspired exposition of the symbolism of the rite, immersion suggests to the mind all that sprinkling does, and far more.

Not many years ago a thoughtful woman made known to me her desire to be immersed, although she had been sprinkled in early life. When asked why she felt so strong a desire for immersion, her reply included and emphasized this declaration: "I feel that I ought to express in baptism the devotion of my whole being to the Lord." And in a recent sermon by Mr. Spur-

geon, the following words are addressed to the members of his church:

"We who have been baptized upon profession of our faith, were taught in that solemn ordinance to bless the Lord with our entire being, for we were not sprinkled here or there; but we were, in the outward sign, buried with the Lord Jesus in baptism unto death, and we were immersed into the name of the Triune God. If our baptism meant anything, it declared that we were henceforth dead to the world, and owned no life but that which came to us by the way of the resurrection of Jesus. Over our heads the liquid water flowed, for we resigned the brain, with all its powers of thought, to Jesus; over the heart, the veins, the hands, the feet, the eyes, the ears, the mouth, the significant element poured itself, symbol of that universal consecration which deluges all the inward nature of every sanctified believer. My baptized brethren, I charge you, belie not your profession."

Now if this appeal rests upon the symbolism of the rite, as I believe it does, and if the application of it to infants has tended to the substitution of sprinkling for immersion, the evil has

been great. For truth has been hidden, truth which the Saviour came into the world to reveal, truth which he was pleased to signalize and enforce by a holy ordinance, truth which a disciple in the freshness of his first love wishes to confess in the clearest manner possible. Who can measure the evil resulting from the practice of withdrawing such truth from the eyes of men?

I must now add, that young converts do often, if not always, esteem it a privilege to put on Christ by baptism, and sometimes express regret at their being prevented from so doing by a rite imposed upon them in infancy. But what is even more to be deplored, some who believe it their duty to avow their new-born faith and love by following the Lord in baptism, are led by their regard for the feelings of others to stifle their own convictions and wrong their own souls. This surely is a sore evil under the sun; and, so far as I can see, it is due to the practice of infant baptism.

II. *Infant baptism ascribes to the ordinance an imaginary virtue.*

I do not for a moment claim that it originated a belief in baptismal regeneration; for an im-

partial study of the Christian literature of the first three centuries after Christ will reveal the fact, that a certain regenerating efficacy was attributed to baptism long before the latter was applied to infants. Decisive proof of this may be found in the First Apology of Justin Martyr,* and in the Shepherd of Hermas. The Shepherd was written about the middle of the second century, and it plainly asserts that not even the saints of a former dispensation could be saved through Christ, without going down into the baptismal waters and experiencing their life-giving virtue. Hence the apostles, after finishing their earthly course, are said to have preached Christ and administered baptism to the patriarchs in Hades. If, then, the question of priority between the doctrine of baptismal regeneration and the practice of infant baptism is answered from history, the doctrine must be said to have preceded the practice by more than fifty years. And, if it went before the practice, it must have led to it. For let any man believe two things, namely, that infants need the new

* See the account of Baptism, § 61.

birth in order to be saved, and that this birth is only realized in baptism, and an argument of tremendous cogency will urge him to apply the rite to babes, even before they are eight days old.* But the writings of the early Christians reveal their belief of these two things more than half a century before the faintest traces of infant baptism appear. The nature of the evidence and the nature of the case compel us therefore to say, that the practice of infant baptism owed its first existence to the theory of baptismal regeneration.†

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* Note the words of Cyprian (i. p. 168, Gersdorf's ed.). "Quantum vero ad causam infantium pertinet, quos dixisti intra secundum vel tertium diem, quo nati sint, constitutos baptizari non oportere, et considerandam esse legem circumcisionis antiquæ, ut intra octavum diem eum, qui natus est, baptizandum non putares, longe aliud in concilio nostro omnibus visum est. In hoc enim quod tu putabas esse faciendum, nemo consensit, sed universi potius judicamus nulli homini nato misericordiam Dei et gratiam denegandam." The whole letter and argument are a curiosity, but they show that baptism was deemed necessary to the salvation of infants.

† And this circumstance accounts for the slight resistance which it encountered at the outset. The tendency of the period was towards ritualism. Tertullian, who first refers to infant baptism, though only to oppose it, refers

But, if the theory originated the practice, the practice has reacted in favor of the theory. For the two are natural allies, and neither is strong apart from the other. As it is well-nigh impossible to maintain infant baptism without the aid of that theory, so I believe it would be found impossible to support that theory for a long time without the complement and strength afforded by the practice.

It is indeed true that some justify the practice on the single ground that infants are brought into covenant relations with Christ by baptism,

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also to the sign of the cross as commonly employed; and to various established customs which followed baptism—the anointing of the candidate, the imposition of hands, the eating of milk and honey, and the refraining from the bath for a whole week. Now it is impossible for any one to show when these and other ceremonies were first introduced. Ritualism was in the air, and the introduction of new rites, or the wider application of existing rites, was natural and easy. Hence, the exact date of the rise of infant baptism can no more be given than the exact date of the rise of the other additions to apostolic baptism, or the time when other ceremonies were first introduced. The spirit of the age and the culture of the people made these ritual innovations welcome, and not until their evil effects began to be in some degree obvious, could we expect to meet with remonstrances against them.

while all who are not baptized are left to the uncovenanted mercy of God. The effect of the ordinance is not therefore supposed to be moral, in the heart or character, but rather civil or perhaps legal, in the standing of infants before God. They are more likely to be converted in after life, because the seal of the covenant is applied to them in infancy, securing to them a larger measure of privilege or grace. Thus, many years ago, an orthodox clergyman lost a disobedient son by drowning. There was very little, I suppose, in the lad's character to relieve the father's anguish, yet the latter expressed a hope, founded on the single fact of his early baptism, that his boy had fallen asleep in Jesus.* And this instance is but one of many. For all who believe in infant baptism have an

* That pious father, who had doubtless offered prayer a thousand times in the name of Jesus for his wayward son, and who knew and taught that the prayer of God's dear children will be heard by their heavenly Father, yea, heard it may be sometimes in the very hour of death, forgot all the promises of God in this respect, and found his only comfort in thinking of an outward rite administered to his child in infancy. I sympathize profoundly with his sorrow, but, with the New Testament in my hands, I wonder at the direction in which he turned for relief.

impression that, in some way and to some extent, the saving grace of God depends on the reception of this rite. Ignoring the proper use and blessing of baptism, as a sacred and symbolical confession of Christ, which contributes to growth in character and life, they fix their attention upon its supposed virtue in procuring or producing the new birth. Ten years ago I had a long interview with a distinguished theologian of Berlin, in which the progress of our views in Prussia was freely discussed. He conceded at once that neither sprinkling nor pouring was sanctioned by the apostles; their baptism included an immersion of the subject in water; but he strenuously asserted that the ordinance must be useless, if it be not either a cause or a condition of the new birth. He seemed unable to comprehend its value as a testimony to the truth and as a means of grace to believers. Moreover, he deplored the labors of our brethren in Germany for two reasons especially; first, because the most earnest Christians were drawn from the Lutheran Church into the Baptist ranks; and, secondly, because the religious welfare of the people was amply

secured by the established faith. When reminded by me that great multitudes appeared to contemn the law of God, the gospel of Christ, and the holy Sabbath, he appealed to their having received baptism and the eucharist, as the ground of his belief in their ultimate salvation. His reliance was placed on sacramental grace. And this professor of theology is a representative man, a teacher of the faith that rules in the fatherland. His views are honored by the Lutheran Church of to-day.

Nor are they confined to the members of that Church, but are accepted by a large part of the Church of England and of the Church of Scotland, together with all who belong to either the Papal or the Greek Church. Baptismal regeneration is therefore taught by an overwhelming majority of those that apply the rite to infants. And is not this doctrine the logical result of their practice? If the church is the kingdom of Christ; if babes must be renewed in order to share the life of that kingdom; and if they are to receive baptism, which, in the case of adults, conditions or attests their entrance upon that life, must not this ordinance in some

we / rescue the infant soul from ruin by imparting grace? It can convey no truth to the mind of the babe; it can testify of no conscious change, experience, or purpose in the heart of the babe; but may it not, as a sacrament, work in the unconscious spirit, infusing the principle of a holy life? The application of the rite being conceded, what more comforting theory of its virtue can be imagined? This theory is a key which opens the lock and explains the usage; therefore it must be and is correct.

But if the practice were to be laid aside as unscriptural, or were to be everywhere neglected as of doubtful origin and utility; if baptism were for any good reason to be again restricted to persons who seek it of their own accord, how long would it be, think you, before nearly all that know the Lord would accept the obvious meaning of the New Testament, and see in this ordinance an acknowledgment of grace already received, a profession of faith already implanted in the heart, a symbol of the new birth from God, manifesting itself to the world in cheerful obedience? Let infant baptism pass away, and the seductive error of baptismal regeneration will

not long survive. Let infant baptism pass away, and believers' baptism, ordained by Christ and honored by the apostles, will soon take its place—a change that cannot, I verily believe, be sought too kindly, too conscientiously, and too persistently by the friends of Jesus. Says Dr. Hodge: "The reception of baptism, so far as adults are concerned, is an intelligent, voluntary act, which from its nature involves, 1st, a profession of faith in Christ, and 2d, a promise of allegiance to him. This is clear from the command of Christ to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. A disciple, however, is both a recipient of doctrines taught and a follower. Everyone, therefore, who is made a disciple by baptism, enrolls himself among the number of those who receive Christ as their teacher and Lord, and who profess obedience and devotion to his service. This is further clear from the uniform practice of the apostles. In every case on record of their administering the rite, it was on the condition of a profession of faith on the part of the recipient. This has also in all ages been the practice of the church No

man was admitted to baptism without an intelligent profession of faith in Christ, and a solemn engagement of obedience to him. The practice of Romanist missionaries, in baptizing the heathen in crowds, can hardly be considered as invalidating this statement." These sentences from the pen of a distinguished Pedobaptist divine, though perhaps a little too unqualified, confirm my position. For according to their testimony, the application of baptism to adults has in every age and in all branches of the church been restricted to those who avow their faith in Christ. But Paul distinctly affirms that "No one can call Jesus Lord, but in the Holy Ghost;" and John reiterates the same truth by saying, that "Every one who believeth that Jesus is the Christ, hath been begotten of God." Admit the statement of Dr. Hodge, that, by the common, if not universal consent of Christians, faith should precede baptism in the case of adults, and the testimony of the apostles, that the work of the Spirit in regeneration is presupposed by faith, and it follows, that the doctrine of baptismal regeneration would pass away with the practice of infant baptism, or at least would

soon follow after it. The latter may therefore be justly charged with aiding and abetting the evil involved in the former.

III. *Infant baptism mars the constitution of the Christian churches.*

To prove this I am called to show that Christian churches ought to be composed of such persons only as give credible evidence of faith in the Lord Jesus; for infant baptism brings into them persons who do not give this evidence. Your attention is therefore invited to but a single feature of an apostolic church. It was a company of believers in Christ. I do not mean to say that there were no hypocrites in it, for Judas and Ananias and Simon Magus bore the name of disciples for a time; and so fair a show of sincerity did they make, that only an eye which pierces through every disguise could detect their falseness at the outset. But I mean that these few deceivers, as well as all the worthy disciples of Jesus, were baptized and banded together in churches upon a profession of their personal faith, a profession that was apparently honest and heartfelt, the utterance of a new life in the soul.

In support of this position, I refer you again to a passage in the Epistle to the Galatians: "Ye are all sons of God through your faith in Christ Jesus. For all ye who were baptized into Christ did put on Christ." This letter was addressed to the churches of Galatia, and the passage which I have read, to all the members of those churches. "Ye are no longer," is the meaning of the apostle, "kept as wards under the law, as minor children under a schoolmaster, but ye are all sons of God, by adoption, through your faith in Christ, which was solemnly professed by you in your baptism." Now, if children in their minority had been baptized in Galatia along with their believing parents, and on account of their parents' faith, and if this process had been going on for a period of ten years, since the first visit of Paul to this province, there must have been many in the churches, say, one-third or one-half the members, who did not by their own act put on Christ in baptism. How then could the apostle say: "Ye are all in Christ by faith, and, therefore, are sons of God, for ye did all put on Christ in baptism?" His language appears to

be strained and unnatural, if addressed to companies of men, only a part of whom had avowed their personal faith in baptism, or indeed in any other way. And the same may be remarked of a passage in his First Epistle to the Corinthians: "For in one spirit also we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit,"—language which is best explained by supposing that baptism was administered to those, and those only, who were believed to have the Spirit of God, so that spiritual incorporation into the body of Christ went before professional and sacramental. For this epistle was sent, not to a part of the church of God in Corinth, but to the whole of it, "together with all that call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place." It is true that the church is also described as those who are "sanctified in Christ Jesus," "called saints," not, however, to suggest the idea of a church within the church, but to remind the members, one and all, of the grace which they had received from God and had thankfully acknowledged before the world.

With equal certainty may it be affirmed that Paul addressed all the members of the church at Philippi as "saints in Christ Jesus," and as notable for their fellowship in respect to the gospel; for in his greeting he invokes "the grace of God upon all the saints in Christ Jesus which are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons," naturally meaning the entire church of that city; and in the last part of his letter he remarks: "When I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me in account of giving and receiving, but ye only," which implies that the persons to whom he wrote composed a church. It would be easy to multiply citations from the letters of Paul, showing that membership in a Christian church was deemed by him presumptive evidence of genuine faith, and certain evidence of avowed faith; hence, until weighty reasons constrain us to believe that some were brought into the apostolic churches, who either would not or could not make any profession of their own faith, I must hold and teach that those churches were companies of believers, that such persons only were

admitted to them as gave credible evidence of love to God and faith in Christ.*

But against this view of Christian churches in the first age, two objections have been

* The Augsburg Confession says: "Est ecclesia congregatio sanctorum, in qua evangelium recte docetur et recte administrantur sacramenta. . . . Lyra testatur: Ecclesia consistit in illis personis, in quibus notitia vera et confessio fidei et veritatis. . . . Ecclesia est . . . congregatio sanctorum, qui vere credunt evangelio Christi, et habent Spiritum Sanctum. Catechismus Major: Credo, in terris esse quendam sanctorum congregatiunculam et communionem ex mere sanctis hominibus coactam sub uno capite Christo, per Spiritum Sanctum convocatam, in una fide, eodem sensu et sententia, multiplicibus dotibus exornatam, in amore tamen unanimem, et per omnia concordem, sine sectis et schismatibus. Ch. of Eng.: Ecclesia Christi visibilis est cœtus fidelium, in quo verbum Dei purum prædicatur et sacramenta, quoad ea quæ necessario exiguntur, juxta Christi institutum recte administrantur. Scotch ch.: Unam ecclesiam constanter credimus, id est, societatem et multitudinem hominum a Deo electorum, qui illum recte per veram fidem in Jesum Christum colunt et amplectuntur, qui ejusdem ecclesiæ solus est caput, quæ etiam est corpus et sponsa Christi Jesu. Helvetic ch.: Oportet semper fuisse, esse et futuram esse ecclesiam, id est e mundo evocatum et collectum cœtum fidelium, sanctorum inquam omnium communionem, eorum videlicet, qui Deum verum in Christo servatore per verbum et Spiritum S. vere cognoscunt et rite colunt, denique omnibus bonis per Christum gratuito oblatis fide participant."

pressed, one of them drawn from the parable of the tares, and the other, from the so-called Jewish Church The parable of the tares, according to Dr. Hodge, proves "it is not the purpose of God that the visible church on earth should consist exclusively of true believers." "Our Lord," he remarks, "expressly forbids the attempt being made. He compares his external kingdom, or visible church, to a field in which tares and wheat grow together. He charged his disciples not to undertake to separate them, because they could not, in all cases, distinguish the one from the other. Both were to be allowed to grow together until the harvest." On this interpretation of the parable, and the corresponding use of it in the justification of infant church membership, I submit the following reflections: 1. Christ explains his own parable, and declares "the field" in question to be "the world," not "the visible church;" and his definite interpretation is to me an end of doubt. 2. He declares "the reapers," and so, by parity of reason, "the servants of the householder," to be "angels," not "the children of the kingdom." The children of the king-

dom are represented in this parable, according to the Master's own word, by "the good seed." 3. He charges the introduction of the evil seed to "the devil," not to "the servants of the householder," much less, to the "good seed," "the children of the kingdom." 4. He says that the tares, or darnel, was sown by night, that is, secretly, and not by day, or openly. Would the defenders of infant baptism have the friends of Christ do that openly, in the face of the sun, which the Saviour himself ascribed to Satan, working stealthily under cover of night? I cannot withhold an expression of amazement at the use which they have made of this parable. The true meaning of it may be given in the words of William Arnot: "It appears to me, then, that the Lord's direct and immediate design in this parable is, not to prescribe the conduct of his disciples in regard to the conflict between good and evil in the world, but to explain his own. Knowing that their Master possessed all power in heaven and in earth, it was natural that Christians of the first age should expect an immediate paradise. Nothing was more necessary for the support of

their faith in subsequent trials, than distinct warnings from the Lord, that even to his own people the world would remain a wilderness." In a word, the early Christians must be taught that their King, with all the powers of nature and of the heavenly world at his command, would not root out evil from the earth in which his children were, until the end should come; and what he would not allow his ministers, his servants, his angels, to do, until the end of the world, lest some of the children of the kingdom should be destroyed with the children of the wicked one, it may certainly be inferred that he would not have the children of the kingdom do themselves. Persecution is, therefore, implicitly condemned. The wicked are not to be exterminated by the righteous. But the passage has no reference to the discipline of offenders by the church; nor does it, in the slightest degree, sanction the introduction of ungodly persons into the church. It says not a word in respect to the constitution of the church, favorable to infant membership. The "good seed" are "the children of the kingdom;" "the tares" are *not* "the children of the kingdom," but *are* "the

children of the wicked one." There is nothing, then, in the parable of the tares to show that the house of God should not be built exclusively of what are supposed to be "living stones," and much to show that it should be built, so far as intention goes, of such stones only.

The second great argument for recognizing certain persons who are not supposed to be converted as members of Christian churches, is the constitution of the Jewish nation. The terms of admission to a Christian church may be learned, it is said, from the terms of admission to the congregation of Israel. As in the latter, the condition of the children was determined by the condition of the parents, so must it be in the kingdom of Christ.* Says Dr. Hodge:

* In setting forth the nature of the visible church, Dr. Hodge lays down the following propositions: 1. "The visible church is a divine institution." 2. "The visible church does not consist exclusively of the regenerate." 3. "The commonwealth of Israel was the church." 4. "The church under the New Dispensation is identical with that under the Old." 5. "The terms of admission into the church before the advent were the same that are required for admission into the Christian church." 6. "Infants were members of the church under the Old Testament economy." 7. "There is nothing in the New

"In the sight of God, parents and children are one. The former are the authorized representatives of the latter; they act for them; they contract obligations in their name. In all cases, therefore, where parents enter into covenant with God, they bring their children with them." Again he says: "If a man joined the commonwealth of Israel, he secured for his children the benefits of the theocracy, unless they willingly renounced them. And so when a believer adopts the covenant of grace, he brings his children within that covenant, in the sense that God promises to give them, in his own good time, all the benefits of redemption, provided they do not willingly renounce their baptismal engagements."

It will be observed that Dr. Hodge first asserts that *parents* and children are one in covenant relations, and then that *a man* and his children are one in these relations. There is a difference between the statements which must not

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Testament which justifies the exclusion of the children of believers from membership in the church." 8. "Children need and are capable of receiving the benefits of redemption." —(pp. 547–558).

be overlooked. For in the earlier economy it was the father, not the parents, who represented the family; hence none but male children, who might become heads of families, were circumcised. The husband was as truly the representative of his wife as he was of his children, of his daughters as he was of his sons, and of his servants, with their children, as he was of his own wife and children. Will asserters of infant baptism apply this to the Christian economy, and, when a man is baptized on profession of his faith in Jesus, proceed to baptize his wife and children also, even though the latter are old enough to believe for themselves, but do not? Unless they are willing to go to this length, they cannot justly claim to make the Jewish congregation a model for Christian churches. But they do not commonly go to this length; for they see that it would ill accord with the genius of Christianity, in which the spiritual is all-controlling, while the formal and natural is wholly subordinate. When the Saviour, on a certain occasion, "stretched forth his hand toward his disciples and said, Behold, my mother and my brothers! For whosoever shall do the will of

my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother," he made manifest the ties which are recognized as alone valid in his reign. But this was not the only occasion when he uttered words relevant to my subject: he said at another time: "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. . . . Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household." Also, "He that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me;" and by this language he pointed very distinctly to a new order of things, to a kingdom into which no one could enter without personal faith and confession, into which men would come as individuals, not as families, the father for himself and the son for himself, and in which all natural affinities and distinctions would be merged in the one sacred kinship of soul to Christ, and the one infinite distinction between faith and unbelief, life and

death. I grant that the natural Israel was typical of the spiritual Israel; but the type moves on a lower plane than the thing typified; into the typical nation men entered by natural birth, into the nation typified men enter by spiritual birth; those born of Abraham according to the flesh were circumcised, those born of God by the Spirit are baptized.*

Besides, if the Christian church is but a continuation of the Jewish, how is the preaching of Christ to be explained: "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish?" Had the Jews willingly renounced their circumcision and their covenant standing? If they had, by their self-righteousness, though not intentionally, have not all children baptized in infancy, and still impenitent at the age of ten or twelve, renounced their

* When it suits their purpose Pedobaptists are ready enough to recognize the disparity between the Mosaic economy and the Christian. Thus Cyprian, in reply to the argument that baptism should be deferred to the eighth day after birth, because circumcision was performed on that day, says in his letter to Fidus, containing the decision of a council: "Nam quod in Judaica circumcisione carnali octavus dies observabatur, sacramentum est in **umbra atque** in imagine antepræmissum, sed veniente **Christo veritate completum,**" etc. (Gersdorf's ed i p. 170.)

baptismal vows in the same way? And if this be so, what advantage is there in the rite? Are vows renounced better than no vows at all? Is there aught in the New Testament to justify such a view? Was not rather the gospel offered freely to all? Did not God bestow his grace on the uncircumcised Gentile as largely as on the circumcised Jew? But if mere unbelief on the part of a baptized child does not, as I understand Dr. Hodge to say, destroy his standing in the church, nor deprive him of the blessing of the covenant, then I submit that the progress from the shadow to the substance, from a kingdom that made large use of carnal weapons to one that employs only spiritual weapons, has been small indeed. Until, then, it can be shown that the type is on a level with the thing typified, and that Pedobaptists christen wives and grown-up children, as well as infants, on the faith of their husbands and fathers, they cannot rightly go back to the Jewish theocracy to learn the constitution of a Christian church.

I therefore return with full confidence to my position that a Christian church, as defined by the New Testament, is a company of persons

giving credible evidence of their own faith. It will of course be recollected that I am giving but a single feature or characteristic of a church. And it is needless for me to insist that infant baptism, according to the doctrine of its ablest advocates, either introduces unbelieving children into the church, or assumes them to be already in the church at birth, or implants in their hearts sacramental and regenerating grace. Those who reject the last theory—that of baptismal regeneration—do therefore deliberately sow tares, to use their own figure, in the field which is the visible church. To employ a second figure, they put stones that are not "living" into the building of God. They wittingly and willingly mingle the carnal with the spiritual, and, I may say without offence to truth, apply the name "saint" to many a one whom they believe to be utterly unsanctified in heart. To do this seems to me equally against the word of God and against sound reason. It puts us back into the ritual and typical dispensation, into the state of pupilage, and offers the shadow of a spiritual kingdom in lieu of the reality. And so it mars the testimony given by the very consti-

tution of an apostolic church to the nature of Christ's kingdom, as one which is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

It may, however, be said by some who practise infant baptism, that a covenant relation with God is not a church relation, that children are consecrated in baptism and brought into covenant relations with God, but are in no sense members of the Christian church. But the position given to christened yet unconverted children by this theory is too uncertain to satisfy the mind. They seem to be neither in nor out of the kingdom; as a Catholic might say, they are in a sort of "limbus infantum," akin to the everlasting home of children who die in infancy, unchristened. For one I am unable to comprehend the relation which they hold to the covenant, or the principle on which they have been baptized; nor do I see that those who take this view of their position have any more light than I.

IV. *Infant baptism facilitates the union of church and state.*

This, if I mistake not, has been denied, though

it stands before my mind as an almost self-evident truth. The testimony of history is not, perhaps, decisive on the point, but whatever force it has favors my position. The friends of infant baptism claim that this rite has the same place and office in the Christian church, as a visible body, which circumcision had in the Jewish theocracy; but that theocracy was a union of church and state, and circumcision was confessedly adapted to it. The story of the Jewish people shows how naturally a person could be claimed as a subject of both church and state by a rite applied in infancy. But this is not the only instance. Since the reign of Constantine many examples of the union of civil and religious authority in the same government are on record. In some instances that union has been formal and complete, in others it has been tacit and partial. The Pope wielded the two swords for ages over a part of Italy; and would not perhaps refuse, if invited, to wield them over the whole world. The Emperor of Russia has pontifical as well as imperial power. In Spain and Austria, in France and Bavaria, there has been no exact line of demarcation between the func-

tions of the church and those of the state. The power of the state has, however, been nearly always at the service of the hierarchy, and the influence of the hierarchy has been with those who were over the people. There has been a kind of holy alliance between kings and priests, for the purpose of keeping the people in subjection, and this alliance has been none the less effective because it has left the parties to it apparently distinct. It is scarcely necessary for me to specify other instances of a similar character. The history of England, Old and New,* of Prussia† and the smaller German States, would illustrate the union of the two swords for the attainment of one and the same end. And in all these nations the practice of infant baptism made the partial or complete identification of church and state easy. For if the church can give to all the

* See Uhden's "New England Theocracy," Backus' "History of the Baptists," "Life and Times of Isaac Backus," "The Writings of Roger Williams," etc.

† The sufferings of Mr. Oncken in Hamburg, and of others in Prussia proper, illustrate the later and milder forms of religious persecution. Mr. Oncken's testimony as to the source of opposition to his work, namely (in a whisper) infant baptism! deserves notice.

people in their infancy a place in her sacred enclosure and a certain rank among her children, the state can easily endorse that act and make it a qualification for public service; nay, it can be persuaded to enforce the claims of the church upon the respect and support of all her children. But if men are admitted to the church on the sole ground of their personal faith; if it is deeply felt that religion is a service of God by the conscience and the heart, and that without this inward spiritual life, all outward forms are a pretence and a lie; in other words, if the door into the church is closed to all but those who enter of their own accord, with love to the Saviour in their hearts, it is plain that a union of church and state becomes practically impossible. For many worthy citizens will not bow to Christ; many who render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, will not render to God the things that are God's. An honest faith in the Redeemer cannot be exacted by the civil power; but an honest faith in him is the one thing which qualifies a man for the church. Very soon, therefore, the state learns that its weapons are not meant for the kingdom of Christ, and that

the only thing it can properly do is to care for the natural rights and temporal interests of the people. Let infant baptism give place everywhere to believers' baptism, and the union of church and state will soon come to an end.

But what evils flow from the union of church and state? Evils manifold and dreadful, from some of which we turn away with unutterable horror. Worldliness, ambition, strife, deception, persecution, massacre! these are the terms to be employed in characterizing the evils in question. But even these terms, quietly uttered in the sanctuary, fail to bring before our minds the terrible scenes which they represent in the history of the Christian religion. The secularization of the clergy, their love of power and display, their idleness and vanity, their disregard of sound doctrine and pure morals, have been largely due to their dependence on the state for support, to their acquaintance with political arts and intrigues, and to their commerce with ungodly magistrates. But the old adage is true: "like priest, like people." When their spiritual leaders become worldly, ambitious, corrupt, the people are almost sure to follow. So when the

power and splendor of the Roman emperor were reflected upon the clergy, ambitious men began to seek office in the church, and the whole body was gradually leavened by their influence. Pagan temples, Pagan statues, and Pagan rites were dedicated to Jehovah, while the severe and holy simplicity of the early Christians passed away. And thereafter, down through the ages, an adulterous connection between church and state was the source of infinite mischief to the former, and, I fear, of little good to the latter. But I may not attempt to describe that mischief fully. It will be enough for me to recall a single feature of it. The Papal Church is careful to disclaim persecution. It is never her own act. The Pope, as a spiritual ruler, does not take the life of a heretic. How then, it may be asked, have the fires of persecution been kindled? The reply is at hand: by the state in close alliance with the church. By the state doing the sacred judgment of the church. By the Pope, as a civil ruler, executing the will of the same Pope as vicar of Christ. By godly magistrates drawing the sword in their civil capacity to suppress what they have condemned in

their spiritual capacity. And so, tender and enlightened consciences have been mocked and flouted, gentle and saintly souls have been sent up to God from amidst the flames, and the best blood of Christ's earthly flock has flowed in torrents. But more cruel than the last act have often been the tortures that went before it. Confiscation, banishment, the dungeon, the rack, for a clear conscience and a pure life! in New England, in Old England, and throughout Europe! with now and then a Duke of Alva,* or a St. Bartholomew massacre! Such horrors kindled the soul of Milton when he prayed:

* Says Mr. Motley of the Council of Troubles, called also the Blood-Council, over which the Duke of Alva presided in the Netherlands: "So well did this new and terrible engine perform its work, that in less than three months from the time of its erection, eighteen hundred human beings (or twenty a day) had suffered death by its summary proceedings; some of the highest, the noblest, and the most virtuous in the land among the number; nor had it then manifested the slightest indication of faltering in its dread career." "Alva reserved for himself the final decision upon all causes which should come before the council, and stated his motives for so doing with grim simplicity. 'Two reasons,' he wrote to the king, 'have determined me thus to limit the power of the tribunal; the first that, not knowing its members, I might be easily

"Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;
Ev'n them who kept thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones,
Forget not: in thy book record their groans
Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold,
Slain by the bloody Piedmontese that rolled
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
To heaven. Their martyred blood and ashes sow
O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway
The triple tyrant; that from these may grow
A hundred fold, who having learned thy way,
Early may fly the Babylonian woe."

Persecution, however, is scarcely possible

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deceived by them; the second, that *the men of law* only condemn *for crimes which are proved;* whereas your majesty knows that affairs of state are governed by very different rules from *the laws which they have here.*'" But this was not enough. "Upon the 16th February, 1568, a sentence of the Holy Office condemned *all the inhabitants* of the Netherlands *to death* as heretics. From this universal doom *only a few persons, especially named,* were excepted. A proclamation of the king, dated ten days later, confirmed this decree, and ordered it to be carried into instant execution, without regard to age, sex, or condition. This is probably the most concise death-warrant that was ever framed. Three millions of people, men, women, and children, were sentenced to the scaffold in three lines." And this for heresy. I need not speak of the St. Bartholomew massacre · the climax is horrible.

without the real, if not organic, union of church and state; but the union of church and state could not long be maintained, were believers' baptism to regain the place which has been usurped by infant baptism. And I cherish an honest pride in the colony planted by Roger Williams in Rhode Island, as the first civil community of modern times, which declined to meddle with religious belief or church life as such. The government of that colony was instituted by Baptists, who firmly held and plainly asserted, that religion is always, if genuine, a matter of personal conviction, that baptism should always express the subject's personal faith in Christ, and that the right of every one to worship God, peaceably, according to his conscience, should be held sacred by the state.

V. *Infant baptism divides the followers of Christ*

Some who practise it plead earnestly for union, and denounce Baptists as the ringleaders of sedition in the Protestant world. In response to all this I would ask these loving friends, whether, in their opinion, their own voluntary separation from the Papal Church makes them the authors of schism in the body of Christ?

Whether the leaven of error in the Romish communion is not rather the divisive principle? Whether a company of believers in Jesus, loyal, sincere, truth-loving, can be justly called heretics or schismatics, simply because they insist on obeying the law of Christ, preserving intact the ordinances which he gave, or using them as he commanded? It is error, not truth, which is responsible for a divided church. If the Judaizers in Galatia had increased till they were a majority that could not be cut off, the faithful members would have been constrained by fealty to the Master to leave them and organize churches according to the gospel. And always, when a church, through error in doctrine or in practice, ceases to represent fairly "the gospel of the kingdom," when it so modifies its own constitution, or so turns away from the law of Christ as to make reform impracticable, then all who still hold the Head should withdraw themselves, and form a new body in harmony with the apostolic rule; and the responsibility of the division will rest with those who have abandoned or perverted the truth, not with those who leave the recreant church. Hence,

if infant baptism is unauthorized by the New Testament, those who insist upon having it practised in their churches, must be accountable for the schism occasioned by it. I am unable to discover any authority for it in the word of God; nay, I am compelled to look upon it as the perversion of a Christian ordinance, subtracting from its meaning and adding to that meaning, moving ritualism into the foreground and personal faith into the background, permeating as leaven the whole constitution and work of the church, and, in a word, preparing it for papal usurpation, for union with the state, and for the infinite horrors of persecution. A firm adherence to believers' baptism only, would, by the blessing of God, have prevented all these, together with many of the ecclesiastical divisions which have distracted in a measure the kingdom of Christ on earth.

My task is now finished. It has been performed, I am sure, imperfectly, yet with an aim to speak the truth in love, to withhold no part of the large indictment through fear of giving offence, and to put down nought in malice. It has

been performed, I may humbly say, as in the presence of One who is love itself, whose favor is of infinite value to me, and whose displeasure is worse than death. If I have added count to count, it has not been in heat or contempt, but with a feeling akin to that of the apostle when he described himself as "sorrowful, yet always rejoicing." For, though pained by what I think to be deviations from the law of Christ, and sometimes oppressed with sadness by differences among the servants of Christ, I believe in the power of truth to win its way into all Christian hearts at last; and though it is less agreeable to speak against error than to speak directly for truth, both must be done in the fitting time and place, both were done by our blessed and gracious Lord and by his inspired apostles; and we may well be content to follow in their footsteps. He who was himself faithful in reproving error, is able to make our feeble imitation of his fidelity a blessing to his people, as well as an honor to his name. And so, having an earnest good will to all, and a steadfast confidence in the Giver of truth, and in the truth itself, I commend what has been said to your prayerful regard.

IMMERSION

ESSENTIAL TO

CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

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IMMERSION ESSENTIAL TO CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

THE object set before us is to maintain the proposition, that *Immersion in water is essential to Christian Baptism.*

The point here involved is not by any means the most important of those upon which Baptists differ from many of their fellow Christians. The questions: Who ought to be baptized? and, What does baptism signify and effect? appear to us, so far as it is proper to assign degrees in matters of divine ordinance, to be of far greater consequence.

To insist on the scriptural act of baptism is a necessary consequence of a great fundamental principle, which was once held by Baptists almost alone, but which many of our brethren of other connections are now coming to share—the exclusive authority of Scripture. We do not say simply the authority, nor the paramount

authority, but the exclusive authority of Scripture. Baptism is performed at all, simply because the Scriptures direct us to perform it; therefore we feel bound to inquire what it is that they direct, and to do that. We cannot acknowledge any other authority. The opinions and practices of eminent Christians in past ages, yea of our own best friends, our pastors, our parents, must not be regarded, except so far as they may help us to determine what is taught on the subject in the Scriptures.

And it is not an inquiry as to the mere *manner* of performing a duty. The popular phrase, "*mode* of baptism," seems to us to beg the question. The real question is, What *is* baptism? Compare the case of the Lord's Supper. No Protestant insists strongly on any particular *mode* of observing the Lord's Supper. We may have our preference, and may recommend it—as sitting around a table, kneeling around a railing, sitting in the pews, etc.,—yet we do not insist. But when the Romanist gives only the bread to the laity, reserving the cup for the priests, all Protestants cry out. The Romanist might say, "Why, does not the bread really

represent the great fact that Christ gave *himself* for us? Does not the body include the blood? May we not get all that is essential to the ordinance in taking the bread alone?" We—all who are commonly called Protestants—answer two things. First, to take the wine also, makes a more complete and expressive representation. Second, our Lord *told* us to eat bread and drink wine in remembrance of him; what right have we to alter that which he appointed, as if we knew better than he? Now just the same ground do Baptists take as to baptism. They do not insist strongly on the mere manner and circumstances of its administration. Thus, it is a mere question of taste and convenience whether it shall be performed in a stream or a baptistery. Dr. Judson preferred to baptize face foremost. Even the practice of trine immersion, which was once very common, and still exists in some quarters, while it is in our judgment unwarrantable and improper, may be considered a matter of no great importance. The question is, not what is the most appropriate manner of performing baptism, but what is the act to be performed. And when any think proper to alter this act, we

object most earnestly, and for the same two reasons as in the other case. First, the act enjoined gives a more complete and expressive representation of those things which baptism denotes; in fact without it, the representation is grievously defective. Second, our Lord *told* us to baptize; what right have we to alter his appointment? He did not tell us to recline at a table as he was doing, and take bread and wine, but he told us to take bread and wine; and we do not insist on the reclining, we insist on the bread and wine. He did not tell us to be baptized in the Jordan, or in a river as he was, but he told us to be baptized; and we do not insist on the Jordan, or any river, or any other mere circumstance, but we insist on the baptizing.

What then do the Scriptures teach as to the action which constitutes baptism? Every one should try to decide this question for himself. It is the duty of Christian people to settle every religious question, if possible, by their own personal examination of Scripture. Luther contended for the *right* of private judgment; is there not a corresponding *duty* of private judgment?

A plain man of average intelligence has be-

come a believer in Christ, and knows that he ought to be baptized. He knows, also, that there is a difference among Christians around him as to what is baptism; that three different actions are called baptism. He takes up his New Testament, to read in his own tongue, and to see if, as a matter of private judgment, he can determine what constitutes the baptism which his dear Saviour enjoined. What does he find? The word *baptize* is only borrowed into the English language, and for him does not determine anything, being used, he knows, by different persons in different senses. And he is not acquainted with Greek.

But he finds the record of our Lord's own baptism; that it was in the river Jordan; that after his baptism he came up out of the water. Does some one feel like interrupting me here to say that literally it is "came up *from* the water?" I answer, that is true in Matthew; but in Mark, according to the correct Greek text, it is "out of." And in Matthew, while the word "from" does not itself show that he had been in the water, it does not at all show that he had not; and the connection makes it so plain that he

had, that the versions of Tyndale, Cranmer, Geneva, and King James all render "out of." The expression is like, "Let me cast out the mote *from* thine eye," and the statement in Tobit that "a fish leaped up *from* the river and wished to devour the lad." So our friend is not misled by his English Bible as to this expression. He finds also that when John, after long baptizing in the Jordan, left it for another place, he went to Ænon, "because there was much water there." In reading Acts, he finds that when Philip was about to baptize the eunuch, they went down into the water, and after the baptism they came up out of the water. In reading Romans, he finds the apostle likening baptism to a burial, and arguing that believers must not and cannot continue in sin that grace may abound, seeing that their very baptism, at the beginning of their Christian course, had reference to the death of Christ, and they were buried with Christ by baptism unto death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead, even so they also might live a new life.

Now what can this man conclude, but one thing? Pardon a homely story. The summer

after the battle of Gettysburg, I was preaching in a Virginia brigade at the camp below Orange Court House, during the great and blessed revival in Lee's army. Many soldiers were finding Christian hope. After preaching one day in an old church near the camp, a Presbyterian chaplain arose, called up several soldiers, and proceeded to "baptize" them, as he termed it, from a little bowl of water. When the services were about to close, a Baptist chaplain invited the congregation to go after dismission to a baptistery which had been prepared at the foot of the hill, where the ordinance of baptism would be administered. He handed me his Bible as we went down the hill, asking me to read some passages and pray. I read the account of the baptism of Jesus, the commission in which he enjoins baptism, the account of Philip and the eunuch, and the passage in Romans, and then many soldiers were baptized. As the crowd went away, a soldier was heard to say to his comrades, "I tell you what, fellows, this that they did down here was a great deal more like them Scripturs than what they did up yonder." Can anybody wonder that he thought so? Would not this be the

general verdict of plain men, if they would just look on and consider? If anyone should say that this was but an ignorant man, I will add that a Virginia gentleman of high position and culture, and not a Baptist, once said to me, "Anybody can see that immersion is baptism, and I grant that it takes a good deal of argument and explanation to show that something else is baptism too."

Now remember that the Bible is a book for the *people*—given, in order that the people may read and learn and judge for themselves. We who are called Protestants all contend for this; *we* are not afraid the people will be misled, if they humbly and prayerfully search the Scriptures. It follows that the *obvious* teachings of Scripture—the ideas which lie plainly on its surface, so as to commend themselves to ordinary readers—are, to say the least, extremely apt to be what Scripture was meant to teach. We all insist much on this principle as regards the divinity of our Lord, and the fact that he died to save us. So here; the plain teaching of the English New Testament, to a plain man, who comes to it for information on this subject, will

be that baptism is not a sprinkling, or pouring, but an immersion.

Does some one think our friend's *translation* has misled him on this subject? That would be strange, for the translation certainly was not made by Baptists. (The fact that some Baptists have recently made a revised version does not affect this argument.) The translation he reads, our cherished Bible, was made by Episcopalians, members of the Church of England. And what we Baptists ask of everybody is, Do read your own Bible with your own eyes, and earnestly and prayerfully try to find out this matter, and all such matters for yourself. But it is asserted that here the plain and obvious meaning of our English Bible is not the true meaning. That would seem matter of deep regret. Is it so, that an honest inquirer, who has sense but not erudition, will be led astray on such a point by the very best popular version of the Scriptures that can be found on earth? Still, it is insisted that our inquiring friend must not trust his own judgment of the meaning of his own Bible—he must ask *scholars* what the *original* means. For the sake of the argument we reluctantly consent that he

shall do so. This word *baptize*—it is said to be borrowed from the Greek βαπτίζω, which is said to be the word invariably used where our version has baptize—what does that Greek word mean?

Well, whom shall we ask in our friend's behalf? It is a question of scholarship. Therefore we ought to ask those who are unquestionably able and leading scholars. And they ought to be as nearly as possible *disinterested* as to the matter in hand. Such are the conditions required when we refer any matter whatever to the decision of others.

Now as to the meaning of this Greek word, I will just consult in our friend's behalf the three most recent standard lexicons, one of classical and two of New Testament Greek, which are acknowledged by all scholars as scholarly, scientific, and eminently authoritative. They are first, Liddell and Scott's Lexicon of the Greek Language in general, the sixth edition, revised and greatly augmented, and published last year by two scholars of the Church of England; second, Grimm's edition of Wilke's Lexicon of New Testament Greek, published four years ago in Germany, and now in process of translation

by a Congregationalist scholar in this country; third, Cremer's Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek, published six years ago in Germany, and recently translated in England.

Liddell and Scott say, *baptizo*, "to put in or under water." And they go on to explain various secondary and metaphorical uses as derived from this, *e. g.* to *sink* a ship, a man *soaked* in wine, *over head and ears* in debt, *drowned* with questions. They do not recognize or hint at any other meaning.

Grimm's Wilke translates it, (1) "immerse, submerge;"—then (2) "to wash or bathe by immersing or submerging"—which he says is the meaning in Mark vii. 4, and in the cases of Naaman and Judith;— (3) figuratively, "to overwhelm," as with debts, misfortunes, etc. So much he gives as to the *general* use of the word. In the New Testament rite, he says it denotes "an immersion in water, intended as a sign of sins washed away, and received by those who wished to be admitted to the benefits of the Messianic reign." No hint of its meaning anything else.

Cremer gives as the general meaning "im-

merse, submerge;" and says that in the peculiar New Testament and Christian use, the word "denotes immersion, submersion, for a religious purpose."

Such is the rendering of this word by the three most recent lexicons of acknowledged scientific value; the three which any competent scholar, if asked to recommend lexicons to a student of New Testament Greek, would be sure to name. I might add that the two German commentators on the New Testament, who are the foremost of the century as to full and accurate scholarship, Fritzsche and Meyer, furnish like testimony as to the meaning of this word.

But why, it may be asked, do some Greek lexicons, besides the renderings "immerse," "put in or under water," etc., give the meaning "pour," "drench," etc.? The classical lexicons which give this meaning base it on such expressions as I have mentioned, viz., baptized with wine, sleep, misfortunes, debts, etc. Now in these cases (all figurative, you will observe), some such other sense would be possible, perhaps appropriate—the idea then being that wine, debts, etc., are poured over one so that he is drenched with

them—but certainly it is not *necessary*. This is shown by Liddell and Scott, who explain all such uses as derived from the primary sense of "put in or under water," comparing such English expressions as soaked in wine, over head and ears in debt, etc.; and we may add, immersed in business, in study, sleep, debt, troubles. Now an important general principle is here involved, a principle indispensable to all reliable interpretation of language, namely this: We are not at liberty to assign to a word a new meaning, quite different from its primary and established meaning, until we find some passage which absolutely *requires* it. Examples in which such a new and different meaning would be possible, or even appropriate, or even most natural, will not justify our assigning it, as long as the established meaning will suit even tolerably well. Only when the common meaning is impossible or utterly unsuitable, is it proper to give a new and very different meaning. Unless this principle be followed, interpretation of language, I repeat, becomes utterly uncertain and unreliable. Now it cannot be said that the notion of immersed in debts, etc., is an unnatural or unsuitable image.

To say that the other conception of having debts poured over one would also fit, is nothing to the point. We must, of course, hold on to the common and recognized sense as long as that will answer. It will thus appear that the classical lexicons in question have no right to give such a meaning as "pour," because it differs widely from the established and familiar use of the word, and the examples they cite do not *require*. and therefore do not *warrant* any such meaning. As to the lexicons of New Testament Greek, which claim that some passages in the Bible justify the meaning "pour," I shall speak afterwards.

Such, then, is the testimony of the leading lexicons. To this I need add but one fact, namely, the practice of the Greek Church. Their rule is, and always has been, to immerse. I myself saw a child thus baptized in a Greek church at Scanderoon, or Alexandretta, at the north-east corner of the Mediterranean. They laugh to scorn the idea that their Greek word *baptizo* can mean sprinkling or pouring. Now the Greek is not really a dead language; scholars, in Germany, England, and America, are every day seeing this fact more clearly, and re-

cognizing more fully its importance. I remember when at Athens, a few years ago, a Scottish gentleman, who had spent most of his life in Greece, and had given very close attention to the language, told me of his own accord, that, although a Presbyterian, he thought the Baptists were quite right about the meaning of *baptizo;* and he hunted up a book in modern Greek, on Natural Philosophy, in which I found the word repeatedly employed. The Greeks usually leave this as the sacred word, and take other terms for common actions. But this writer, in describing the mode of determining specific gravity, explained that we first weigh a body in air, and then immerse it in water, and weigh it thus, being suspended by a cord; and this action of immersing he constantly and naturally describes by "baptize." There was recently published in this country a copious and valuable lexicon of Greek usage in the Roman and Byzantine periods, from B. C. 140 to A. D. 1000, by Professor Sophocles of Harvard College, who is himself a Greek, long resident in America. He defines *baptizo* as meaning to dip, to immerse, to sink—and then gives a great variety of uses, all explained as

having this same force; *e. g.* soaked in liquor (intoxicated), sunk in ignorance, bathed in tears, he plunged the sword into his own neck—then, derivatively, to bathe. And as to the New Testament use he says expressly, "There is no evidence that Luke and Paul and the other writers of the New Testament put upon this verb meanings not recognized by the Greeks."

This, then, is the practice of the Greek Church, and this the testimony of the living Greeks who belong to it. The word involved is to them not foreign, but their own word. And one of their constant complaints against the Latin Church—the Church of Rome—is, that these have altered the ceremony of baptism. A modern Greek scholar has said, "The Church of the West commits an abuse of words and of ideas in practising baptism by aspersion, the mere statement of which is in itself a ridiculous contradiction." Soon after the taking of Constantinople, five centuries ago, as we learn from Dr. Döllinger and others, a council of Greek patriarchs agreed, not that they would practise pouring or sprinkling, but that they would recognize it in the Westerns as valid baptism. They were almost ruined, in

danger of being utterly swallowed up by the conquering Turks, and wanted to make friends with the Latin Christians. But at a later period, the Greek patriarchs retracted this. It is still observed in Russia, but those to whom Greek was the native language could not stand it. They said that instead of a *baptismos* the Latin Church practised a mere *rantismos*—instead of an immersion a mere sprinkling.* To a man who spoke Greek every day this was "a ridiculous contradiction."

Such, then, is the evidence which may be given our unlearned friend from scholars, the lexicons, and the living Greeks, concerning their own word. Much more might be added in the way of confirmation; but he would probably say, "Well, it is plain that I *can* trust my English Bible. What these great scholars say—none of them Baptists—and what the living Greeks say and do, accord exactly with the impression I got from my own Bible; and so the evidence is enough; I care for no more."

He for his part might stop there, being con-

* Döllinger, "Kirche und Kirchen," s. 188.

cerned only to determine his own conduct. But I have another and a different task to perform.

In the face of such facts as have been stated, on what ground do any Christian people defend the practice of sprinkling for baptism? Well some of them have really never known the facts, or never stopped to think about them. But others, with the facts before them, still defend sprinkling. Respect for my fellow Christians requires that this matter be as carefully considered as the time will allow. Yet I can but briefly mention, and rapidly discuss.

There are several distinct grounds which are relied on by the same or different classes of persons.

I. Grant that New Testament baptism was immersion, some hold that "the church has authorized a change."

Yes, *clinic* baptism, baptism of a sick person in bed, began as early as the third century to be allowed by some ecclesiastics, *e. g.* Novatian. They poured water copiously around the dying or very sick man as he lay in bed. This practice arose from exaggerated notions of the importance of baptism. We should say, if the man was too

ill to be baptized, it was not his duty; but they were afraid to let a man die without baptism, and as real baptism was impracticable, they proposed a substitute, which by copious pouring would come as near it as possible. There were many disputes as to the lawfulness of this, but it came by degrees to be generally recognized as lawful. As the centuries went on, there was gradual progress. The more convenient substitute was preferred in other cases than illness, was further reduced to mere sprinkling, and became increasingly common. It was long withstood by Popes and Councils, but grew in popularity through the Dark Ages; until in the thirteenth century—one thousand years after clinic pouring began—the Pope finally yielded, and authorized sprinkling in all cases.

So the Reformers found it. And, unfortunately for our modern Christianity, they did not insist on a change. *Luther* repeatedly said a change *ought* to be made, *e. g.*, "Baptism is a Greek word, and may be translated immersion, as when we immerse something in water that it may be wholly covered. And, although it is almost wholly abolished (for they do not dip the whole

children, but only pour a little water on them), they ought nevertheless to be wholly immersed, ... for that the etymology of the word seems to demand." Again, he says that baptism does not simply represent washing for sins, but "is rather a sign both of death and resurrection. Being moved by this reason, I would have those that are to be baptized to be altogether dipt into the water, as the word means, and the mystery signifies." So elsewhere.* In like manner *Calvin.* In commenting on the baptism of the eunuch by Philip, he says: "'They descended into the water.' Here we perceive what was the rite of baptizing among the ancients, for they immersed the whole body into the water; now the custom has become established that the minister only sprinkles the body or the head. But so slight a difference of ceremony ought not to be esteemed by us so important, that on account of it we should split the church or disturb it with quarrels. For the ceremony of baptism itself indeed, inasmuch as it was handed down to us by Christ, we should a hundred times rather fight even to

* See Ingham's "Handbook of Baptism," p. 89.

death, than suffer it to be taken away from us. But when in the symbol of the water we have a testimony as well of our ablution as of our new life; when in water, as in a mirror, Christ represents to us his blood, that from it we may seek our purification; when he teaches that we are fashioned anew by his Spirit, that being dead to sin, we may live to righteousness—it is certain that we lack nothing which pertains to the substance of baptism. Wherefore from the beginning the church has freely permitted herself, outside of this substance, to have rites a little dissimilar." * The ancients, in the time of Philip and the eunuch, practised immersion; a different custom has now become established, the church allowing herself liberty.

The leaders of the Reformation in England attempted a return, not, indeed, to the full New Testament plan, but that of the Fathers in the third century. The rubric of the Church of England has always been, from the Reformation till now, "shall dip the child in the water . . . . but if they certify that the child is weak, it shall

* "Calvin on Acts," viii. 38.

suffice to pour water upon it." This is essentially the principle of the old clinic baptism. And this the Greek Church also tolerates as an exceptional practice. But among the Reformers, on the continent and in England, the custom of several centuries, with convenience, etc., triumphed over these attempts, and pouring, nay, even sprinkling, became the common practice.

In this sense, then, "the church" has changed the act of baptism. On this ground the Roman Catholics stand—*the church* has changed it—so they always meet the complaints and censures of the Greek Church. And intelligent Romanists see exactly how the matter stands among us who are called Protestants. Thus the famous Dr. Döllinger says: "The fact that the Baptists are so numerous, or even the most numerous of all religious parties in North America, deserves all attention. They would, indeed, be yet more numerous, were not Baptism, as well as the Lord's Supper, as to their sacramental significance, regarded in the Calvinistic world as something so subordinate, that the inquiry after the original form appears to many as something indifferent, about which one need not much trouble

himself. The Baptists are, however, in fact, from the Protestant standpoint, unassailable; since for their demand of baptism by submersion they have the clear Bible text; and the authority of the church, and of her testimony, is regarded by neither party." * I may remark here, that, on this subject, the Baptists belong to the majority. It is often objected to us that we are an insignificant minority of the Christian world, and it is a point about which we are not greatly solicitous. But if anybody cares greatly for majorities in such a matter, let him observe that, in contending for immersion as necessary to the baptism taught in the New Testament, we have on our side the whole Greek Church, and the whole Roman Catholic Church, and a very large proportion of the Protestant world, particularly of the Protestant scholars.

To return. This is an intelligible position. New Testament baptism was immersion, but the church has changed it. Accordingly, in the Church of England, few scholars ever, for a moment, question that *baptizo* means immerse,

* "Kirche und Kirchen," s. 337.

or that the New Testament baptism was immersion.

The church has changed it. Very satisfactory for a Romanist, but how can a Protestant rest on this? Chillingworth, the Church of England scholar, left a dictum which has grown famous: "The Bible, I say—the Bible only—is the religion of Protestants." Was this all a mistake?

II. Christian Liberty is the ground on which others proceed.

They say Christians may choose for themselves about mere outward forms; these make no difference if you have the *essence* of the thing. Yes, and so says the Quaker, more strongly still. What would you say to the Quaker? I asked this question of an esteemed friend, who is an Episcopal clergyman. The Quaker tells us the mere outward form of baptism is unnecessary; the essential thing is to have the baptism of the Spirit, and water baptism need not be observed at all. What would you say to him? "I would tell him the Scripture teaches us to baptize *in water*." Very well, I replied, and so it teaches us to *baptize* in water. If you have an

outward ceremony at all, you have a form, and can you say that the *form* of a *ceremony* is of no importance? How will such an one answer the Quaker, except upon the Baptist principle? The state of mind represented, the baptism of the Spirit, is, of course, the essential thing; *without* it, the outward ceremony is an empty form. But our Lord has appointed a form, a ceremony. We ought to observe this because he has appointed it; and plainly, therefore, ought to observe it as he appointed it. Either the Baptist ground, or the Quaker ground.

"But suppose," one says, "that immersion is impracticable, or excessively inconvenient; there is no water, or it is too cold; why not substitute another use of water, and attach the same meaning to it?"

Well, suppose you want to observe the Lord's Supper, and there is no wine to be had—a thing much more likely to happen than no water, and which I once knew to happen in a country neighborhood—why not take some other beverage, and let that represent to us the same thing as wine? We should all unite in raising two objections. First, our Lord told us to eat bread and drink

wine; if circumstances really prevent our doing that, let us do nothing, feeling that we are providentially hindered. Second, while any liquid, as water, might, in some sort, represent the blood of our dear Lord, yet it is obvious that wine much more clearly and strikingly represents it. Even if we did not perceive this, we ought to do just what he said; and much more when we *do* perceive it. And so, if immersion be really impracticable, we should make the *same two points*. First, we must do what he told us, or do nothing. What is really impracticable, is not our duty. Second, while sprinkling with water may represent purification, yet even this part of the meaning of baptism is much more strikingly represented by immersion; while the other part, the idea of burial and resurrection, which the apostle twice connects with baptism, sprinkling does not represent at all. Even if we did not perceive that what he appointed is more expressive, we ought to do just what he said; and much more when we *do* perceive it. Either, then, what he told us to do, or nothing.

But some one is dying—shall we deny him the satisfaction of being baptized? Why not?

How was it with the thief on the cross? Suppose the same dying man wants the Lord's Supper, and you have no wine?

Nay, my friends, such pleas look like *making too much* of baptism. In this, as I said, began clinic baptism; and pray notice how the argument we are discussing—a favorite argument with some—just comes back to the same thing, attaching an unwarranted importance to baptism. If Baptism or the Lord's Supper be providentially impracticable, surely there is nothing lost, and no guilt incurred, by failing to observe it.

III. Others, without going into an argument as to the teaching of Scripture, while neither admitting nor denying that it teaches what we claim, urge *general* reasons why they cannot believe that immersion is obligatory.

1. They will say, as before, that immersion is sometimes impracticable, and so it cannot be necessary to baptism. We answer, when baptism is impracticable it is not our duty; when it is practicable, let us practise it, and not substitute something else.

2. But immersion is often really dangerous. What! a cold bath dangerous, taken promptly,

when a person is sustained, too, by strong excitement, and its effects quickly removed? In a few cases of illness, or extreme feebleness, it might be dangerous, but then it is not our duty. There is, perhaps, nothing in this world which may not sometimes be dangerous.

3. Immersion is indecent. Will you allow a bit of personal experience? My boyhood was spent in one of the counties of Virginia, where Baptists were numerous. The country church to which the family belonged commonly repaired, for baptizing, to my father's mill-pond, which was a very convenient and a very pretty place. I always went to witness it, with eager interest. I was, of course, like other boys, not too good to have noticed and laughed at anything indelicate. But when I grew up and went to the university, and a Presbyterian student one day said that he thought immersion was indecent, the idea was to me utterly novel; it had never, in all my life, entered my head. Such a notion is a mere prejudice of education. If you think baptism indecent, I should beg pardon for saying you have not been "well-raised" in this respect. In many circumstances of life there may be per-

sonal exposure, through bad arrangements, or awkwardness, or accident; as in alighting from a horse or a carriage, in passing a muddy street-crossing, in descending the steps of a church. What does that prove, except that, wherever there is danger of exposure, we must take care to avoid it? If, in any of these cases, or in baptizing, there is great awkwardness or bad management, we condemn the managers. If there is merely accidental exposure when a lady alights from her carriage, or when a lady is baptized, well-bred people will only feel regret and sympathy. Besides, what about sea-bathing? The very persons who oftenest complain of immersion as indecent, are those who most delight in sea-bathing.

4. So many good people have believed in sprinkling, and felt that they were blessed in receiving, administering, or witnessing it. This is, with some, a favorite argument. But consider. Transubstantiation has, from early centuries, been believed in by multitudes of deeply devout people, including such men as Thomas à Kempis and Pascal. They have felt that they were blessed in worshipping the host as the very body

of Christ. So, also, as to the worship of the Virgin Mary; many who were deeply devout have found in it great delight. Good people are not infallible. And God may, and doubtless does, bless people in holding opinions and observing practices that are not in themselves according to his will. This must be so to some extent—else who would be blessed? David was greatly blessed of God, and David was a polygamist. Now, if it is true, to some extent, that he blesses those who have principles and practices which he does not approve, we cannot tell how far it may be carried, and must leave that to God. But one thing follows inevitably, that we must not take the fact of God's blessing a man, or an association of men, as proving that he approves all their doctrines and all their practices.

5. But sprinkling has not only been widely believed in and practised by good people, it has been *defended* by many able and devout men, after careful investigation. Very well, we may answer. You are a Methodist, or an Episcopalian; what do you think of the doctrine of Election, Reprobation, Limited Atonement? Yet you know that for ages these doctrines have been

held and rejoiced in by many good Christians; and defended, after careful investigation, by some of the greatest intellects of the human race. Or you are a Calvinist; what do you think of the doctrine popularly called "falling from grace?" Yet you know that it is held and defended by not a few of the most zealous, fervent, and useful Christians on earth.

But it may be said, this is not a parallel case; these are *doctrines*. That makes no difference as to our argument. If grave errors as to *doctrine* exist, and have long existed, among persons very devout and often richly blessed of God, the same must certainly be true as to the less important matter of *ceremonies*—something may be quite erroneous though held and earnestly defended by some good and wise men. But take the case of Church Government. You are a Presbyterian, and do not believe that Episcopacy is scriptural or expedient; yet how many pious people believe in it and live under it with joy and with religious growth and usefulness; and how many great men defend it after careful investigation, for example, in the Church of England? Or you are an Episcopalian; how

many Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Lutherans, there are in America, Scotland, England, France, Switzerland, Germany, who are neglecters and opposers of Episcopacy, yet are devout, learned, honest?

What is the conclusion from all this? Why, that we are *compelled* to think for ourselves. We may err, as so many have done; but we must not be content without the most earnest efforts to escape error that our circumstances will allow. I repeat, there is not only a *right* of private judgment, there is a *duty* of private judgment. Every man shall give account of *himself* unto God. And how can we square it with our consciences if we do not personally strive, in all possible ways, to find the truth in all things? There is here but one alternative. Either we have no right to be sure that anything is true, or we are bound to assure ourselves by personal inquiry. Either universal skepticism, or private judgment.

IV. But another class of persons endeavor to go deeper, not relying upon the opinions of others. They say, grant that the *classical* use of *baptizo* is as the lexicons mentioned [illegible],

that it always means immerse, and kindred ideas; yet the *Biblical* use is very different, for in the Bible it certainly sometimes means sprinkle or pour. The attempt is made to show this from various passages; really it seems that so many are tried because it is felt that none of them are exactly conclusive. I should be glad to go over all that have been thus appealed to, but time does not allow that, and I can only mention those which are most frequently relied on, or which seem most plausible.

1. It is said that in the case of certain other words, such as pastor, bishop, elder, church, supper, the sacred use is frequently quite different from the classical use; and this is thought to afford a presumption that there is also a difference as to the word *baptize*. But most of these words have not changed their meaning to something quite different; there is only a figurative or novel application, while the ground idea remains the same. Thus the pastor *is* a shepherd (figuratively), the bishop *is* an overseer (spiritually), the church is an assembly (actual or ideal). So *baptize* is still an immersion, having only a special reference and mean-

ing. The word "supper" has been much insisted on, as having a wholly different sense in the New Testament from its classical use. But when the Apostle Paul speaks of the Christians as coming together to eat "the Lord's Supper," it *was* a supper. *We* continue to apply the term "supper" when it is eaten at other times of the day, but *Scripture* does *not* so apply it. Besides, our Lord did not tell us to eat a supper, but to eat bread and drink wine. This is what we must do; and we make here no substitute, either for the elements (bread and wine), or for the action (eating and drinking). So the appeal to "supper" is quite inappropriate. The use of "elder," however, seems to be a case in point, for this word has changed its meaning. But the change is not in *sacred*, as distinguished from secular use. The application of the term "elder" to a person who is not old, is found in classical Greek, as also in Latin and English. The Greek word *presbus*, an old man, is used in classical Greek to denote an honorable man, an ambassador, a senator. So with the Latin *senator*, senator, and the English *alder*man. This, then, is not a case in which the word acquires an en-

tirely different sense in sacred from what it had in classical use. And so all the examples cited break down, and this supposed analogy and consequent presumption, much relied on by some, amounts to just nothing.

2. There is the purification theory, put forward by Dr. Edward Beecher and others. In John iii. 22–5, we are told that Jesus was baptizing (through his disciples); next, that John also was baptizing, for he was not yet cast into prison; and then it is added: "Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews" ("a Jew" is the correct reading), "about purifying." From this it is argued that the word baptize is synonymous with purify. Now baptizing was certainly a very striking form of purification. The fact that baptism was going on might very naturally lead to a discussion between some of John's disciples and a Jew about the general subject of purification, and the relation of this to other purifications. Being a peculiar, remarkable, and novel purification, it was perfectly natural that baptism should lead to discussion of the general subject. But why in the world are we to say that the

terms baptism and purification are synonymous, that baptism means nothing more definite than purification, and that any form of purification might be called a baptism? Suppose a *murder* has occurred, and leads some persons into a discussion concerning *death;* are we to conclude that the terms murder and death are synonymous, and that any form of death may be called a murder? Yet because the occurrence of baptism led to a discussion concerning purification, we are told that these terms are synonymous, and that any form of purification is a baptism. Now upon this assumption rests Dr. Beecher's theory—a huge inverted pyramid resting upon a single point, and that point a mere assumption, and one in itself unwarrantable and unreasonable.

3. But besides these more general considerations, various particular passages are urged as showing that the word *baptizo* in the New Testament is not always taken in the classical sense of immerse and kindred ideas.

(1) The river Jordan is mentioned. I learn that *recently* a clergyman in South Carolina stated that the Jordan is quite too small a

stream to admit of immersion. It is more than two hundred miles long, and in all the region where the baptizing is described as performed, is very hard to ford even at the lowest water of summer. On the other hand, an estimable minister who died not long ago in South Carolina, stated in a sermon that he had been to the traditional place of our Lord's baptism, and that the bank is so steep and the current so swift and deep and strong as to make immersion there impracticable. Now this gentleman perfectly knew that every Spring, when the river is high as he saw it, in the week preceding Easter, there come four or five or seven or eight thousand pilgrims from all parts of the East to this very place, the traditional place of our Lord's baptism, and there these thousands, men, women, and children, do actually immerse themselves and one another in the river—not as baptism (for they have received that in infancy), but as a sacred bath at that holy spot. He knew as well as I do that this happens every Spring at that very place, and yet it never occurred to him to connect that fact in his mind with his own timid notion that immersion would

there be impracticable. I am satisfied he was a good man, and have no idea he meant to deceive, but how strangely good men can sometimes manipulate their own minds. The traditional place is not particularly well suited to baptism when the river is high. As to the bank, it could be cut down and made perfectly convenient in an hour. But there are better places higher up the Jordan (towards the Sea of Galilee I saw some which struck a practised eye as admirably convenient and beautiful), and that may possibly have been one reason why John moved up the river, as he appears to have done.

(2) Much is said about the scarcity of water in Jerusalem, rendering it unlikely that the three thousand on the day of Pentecost were immersed. This seems to some unreflecting people a very strong argument, when they are told that around Jerusalem there is, in ordinary dry weather, no running stream whatever, except the little rivulet from the fountain of Siloam; that even the brook Kidron does not contain a drop of water except when it rains, and the city was supplied by aqueducts, pools, and cisterns. Accustomed to think with the

school boy, that it is a remarkable providence that great rivers so often flow by great cities, and having never studied the water arrangements of ancient Jerusalem, these persons very naturally say, "Why certainly, in a city without a river, a city so scarce of water they would not have spared enough for immersing three thousand men." But only think a moment. Even if we knew nothing of the methods by which Jerusalem was actually supplied, here was a city of say two hundred thousand as its ordinary population, besides several hundred thousand visitors for a week at a time during the great feasts—a great population with all their wants, including the washing of their clothes, and a people who attached extraordinary importance to ceremonial purifications and to personal cleanliness—and you say that in this great city they could not spare water enough for baptizing three thousand persons? Besides, Jerusalem was repeatedly besieged. During the great siege by Titus, a vast multitude from the country crowded the space within the walls, and were kept inclosed there from April to September. There was scarcity of food, but in none

of the great sieges, not even in this last, of which we have so minute an account in Josephus, is there a word said about scarcity of water. It is plain that Jerusalem must have possessed remarkable arrangements of some kind, giving an immense supply of water. And examination has sufficiently disclosed the character of these arrangements, as various writers have shown.* I will add, not as caring to lay any stress on it, that in observing the remains of the immense pool, just outside of Jerusalem on the West, which Robinson identifies with the Lower Pool of Gihon, I was struck with its adaptation to baptism. The pool, six hundred feet long, was made by building two walls across the deep ravine, so as to retain the water brought down in the rainy season. The steep banks on either side present a succession of flat limestone ledges at various depths, and often many feet wide; so that at whatever depth the water might be standing in the pool, there would be excellent standing room for a great number of persons,

* See especially a tract by Dr. G. W. Samson, "On the Water Supply of Jerusalem," published by The Bible and Publication Society.

with the proper depth for baptizing. As there was an abundance of drinking water in the city from the cisterns and aqueducts, this pool was probably used for watering cattle, and perhaps for washing clothes, while the limestone sides and bottom would keep it always clear. Persons who have educated themselves to dislike immersion might fear to stand on these ledges and practise it, but the Jews of that day were accustomed to purificatory immersions, and would have no fear nor difficulty.

(3) The gospel according to Mark (vii. 1–5) tells us that it was the custom of the Jews to baptize (immerse) themselves when they came from the market, and to baptize (immerse) cups, couches, etc. It is said with great confidence, that *of course* this cannot have been immersion. But did you ever notice that if you understand it as merely washing (as in our version), you make the latter part of the evangelist's statement feeble and almost meaningless? Some Pharisees and scribes were watching Jesus and his followers to find fault with them. And seeing some of his disciples eating bread without having washed their hands, they asked Jesus why his

disciples did not walk in this matter according to the tradition of the elders. In narrating this, the Evangelist Mark, who writes especially for Gentiles, pauses in the midst of the narrative to explain to his Greek and Roman readers that the Jews were very particular about this matter of washing the hands before eating, and washing them "with the fist," scrubbing one hand with the other, that is, washing very carefully—observing the tradition of the elders. In fact, he says, they do something more remarkable than this; when they come from the market (where some unclean person or thing may have touched some portion of their body), they do not eat till they have immersed themselves. And he adds that many other things they have received by tradition to hold, immersions of cups and pots and brazen vessels and tables (or it should be "couches"). These practices were so wonderful, and gave such proof of the extreme scrupulosity of the Jews, that it is not strange the writer of the gospel should have gone on to mention them, though nothing was necessary to explain his narrative but the first statement, that they did not eat without having

washed their hands. But if you say that the word *baptizo* in the fourth verse only means "wash," as the word *nipto* does in verse second and verse third, then what was the use of adding verse fourth at all? If according to verse third they do not eat without having carefully washed their hands, what is the use of adding that when they come from the market they do not eat unless they have washed? This certainly must mean something different from washing their hands, and something much more remarkable, or it would have been a waste of words, a very empty tautology, first to tell us that they do not eat at all, under any circumstances, without having carefully washed their hands, and then to add that when they come from market they do not eat without having washed. One would suppose not, if they wash before eating even when they have *not* been to market. Perhaps, some one says, the washing in verse fourth means purifying, they purify themselves when they come from market. Of course it means a purification, but the washing of verse third is a purification too. That of verse fourth must be a different and more thorough purifica-

tion, something more than the careful washing of hands, or else you make the inspired evangelist talk nonsense.

And notice the further addition. He goes on to tell his Gentile readers that these singular and scrupulous Jews have many other traditional observances, as immersions of cups and pots and brazen vessels and couches. Now if you say this cannot have been immersion, but only washing in some other way, then why should the sacred writer have gone so far away from the immediate subject of his narrative merely to say that the Jews washed cups and pots? Most people do. And if it be said the point is that this was a ceremonial washing, a religious purification of the articles mentioned, we may answer that that would not seem remarkable to the Romans. They practised numerous lustrations. A Roman shepherd would sprinkle his sheep with water once a year, accompanied by sacrifices, to preserve them from disease and other evils. Why should Mark go out of his way to inform Romans that the strange Jews made lustration of cups and couches? But understand *baptizo* in its own proper sense,

and all becomes plain and forcible. The Jews not only wash their hands carefully before eating, but when they come from market, where they know not what may have touched some part of their persons, they immerse themselves; and this suggests, and leads the evangelist to mention, that they have many other like thorough and painstaking purifications enjoined upon them by their traditions, as immersions of cups and pots and brazen vessels and couches. Thus the several facts of verse third and verse fourth rise as a climax, and we see the propriety of pausing to mention these various proofs of painstaking scrupulosity.*

But one says, "I cannot believe that they immersed beds; that is absurd." Well, the beds might mean pallets, consisting of several thicknesses of cloth quilted together—as when the paralytic was told to take up his bed and walk, or like the beds they give you now in some houses of Palestine. More probably, however, they mean the couches beside the table, on which the guests reclined to eat, as the subject of the whole connection is their observances about eating.

* Compare Meyer on Mark.

Now suppose there has been contagious disease in one of our homes, that a person has died of small pox, or even of typhoid fever, will any careful housewife think it too much to take the bed on which he died all to pieces—if in fact she does not burn it—and carefully cleanse every part of it? Well, if she would be thus anxious to avoid contagion in her household, the Jews were equally anxious to avoid ceremonial impurity, when, for example, some "unclean" person was found to have reclined on one of their couches. And if she would not shrink from such pains in order to effect a thorough cleansing, why should we pronounce it incredible that the scrupulous Jews would take equal pains to effect a thorough religious purification?

Grant that in such cases the law of Moses did not always require immersion of the unclean object or of the person. The evangelist is expressly speaking of the *traditional* observances, and the Jews had become so very scrupulous that the tradition often required more than the law did. So we find them still doing in the time of Maimonides (twelfth century), and he asserts that such was the real requirement of

the law. "Whenever in the law," he says, "washing of the flesh or of the clothes is mentioned, it means nothing else than the dipping of the whole body in a laver; for if any man dip himself all over, except the tip of his little finger, he is still in his uncleanness."

"A bed that is wholly defiled, if a man dips it part by part, it is pure."* This last statement of his may relieve the extreme solicitude sometimes expressed as to how a bed could be immersed; and both statements show how scrupulous the Jews had become in employing the most thorough form of purification even where it was not required. This also explains the conduct of Judith in the Jewish romance, who, living in a heathen tent and eating the food of the heathen, goes at midnight with her maid into a ravine and immerses herself, and returns "clean."†

* Quoted in Ingham's "Manual of Baptism," p. 373.

† The church-Father, Epiphanius, born in Palestine of Jewish parents in the fourth century, describes, in his great work on Heresies, a party of Jews whom he calls *Hemerobaptistæ*, "Daily baptizers," whose doctrines he says are the same as those of the scribes and Pharisees. Their peculiarity is that "both spring and autumn, both

(4) Another passage relied on by some is 1 Corinthians x. 1, "That our fathers were all under the cloud, and all went through the sea, and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." This, we are told, cannot be understood as an immersion. Certainly, not a literal immersion. What happened to them was only *something like* baptism; and it was certainly quite as much like immersion as it was like sprinkling or pouring, and most people would think a good deal more so. They left the shore, and going down into the bed of the sea, with the

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winter and summer they baptize themselves every day, maintaining that a man cannot live unless he baptizes himself in water every single day, washing himself off and purifying himself from every fault." Epiphanius says, this shows lack of faith; for if they had faith in yesterday's baptism, they would not think it necessary to repeat it to-day. And he declares that if they keep sinning every day, thinking that the water will cleanse them, it is a vain hope; "for neither ocean, nor all the rivers and seas, perennial streams and fountains, and the whole rain-producing apparatus of nature combined, can remove sins when, namely, it is done not according to reason nor by the command of God. For repentance cleanses, and the one baptism through the naming of the mysteries." The same "Daily baptizers" are mentioned in the so-called Apostolical Constitutions, supposed to have been written in the third century.

sea on either side and the cloud above, they were in a position somewhat resembling baptism. And as Christians publicly begin to follow Christ by being baptized unto him, so it may be said that the Israelites began following Moses by being baptized unto him in the cloud and in the sea. Some persons actually tell us there was a sprinkling or pouring, because of the poetical expression in Psalm lxxvii. 17, "The clouds poured out water." Do they really believe the Israelites were made to cross the Red Sea during a pouring rain and a terrific storm of thunder and lightning? The Psalmist alludes in verse sixteenth to the division of the Red Sea, but then passes to speak of the general phenomena of storms. At least so it is explained in the commentary of Addison Alexander, the learned Presbyterian Professor.

(5) One more passage may be mentioned, which some think quite conclusive against immersion, viz.: "baptized with the Holy Ghost." John the Baptist predicted that the mightier One who was coming would baptize with the Holy Spirit. (Literally it is "in the Holy Spirit," and this primary and common signification of the prepo-

sition ought certainly to be retained unless it can be shown to be inappropriate.) And just before his ascension our Lord said, "Ye shall be baptized with (in) the Holy Spirit not many days hence." On the day of Pentecost this was fulfilled. "There came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them distributed tongues as of fire, and it sat on every one of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit." And Peter, in defence and explanation of the speaking with tongues, says that this is that which was spoken through the prophet Joel, "I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh . . . ." Here a baptism with (in) the Spirit is promised, and the fulfilment is represented by a tongue-shaped flame of fire, resting over the head of each person, and is afterwards described as a pouring out; therefore, we are told, there may be baptism without immersion. But if you contend that the symbol must be the same in the fulfilment as in the promise, pray notice that the Spirit is as truly represented by the sound which filled all the house, so that they were enveloped in it, as by the

tongue-shaped flame over the head. But what is the sense of maintaining that when two symbols or images represent the same thing, they must therefore be the same image or symbol? What was predicted as a baptism is afterwards described as a pouring. Well, if I say a man is bathed in pleasure, and presently speak of him as drinking from the cup of pleasure, would any one argue that the action of bathing is the same as drinking from a cup? Peter quotes the prophet as using the image of pouring, while our Lord had used the image of baptism; therefore pouring and baptism are the same thing. Christ is called a lamb, and is also called a shepherd; therefore a shepherd and a lamb are the same thing.

But some say it is absurd in itself to speak of immersion in the Holy Spirit. Why? You cannot conceive of this, and you can conceive of the Spirit as poured out. But both are of necessity figures. The Spirit was not literally poured out, any more than men were literally immersed in the Spirit; and why is the one *figure* any harder to conceive than the other? Cannot you conceive of breath, wind (that is what the word

Spirit means) as filling a space, and men immersed in it? Surely that is a perfectly conceivable figure. And does it not most strikingly represent the persons as completely brought under the influence of the Spirit, as encompassed, surrounded, pervaded by it? We are at present more familiar with the image of the Spirit as poured upon men, but how can one deny that the image of men as immersed in the Breath of God is both conceivable and impressive?

Some other passages are occasionally brought forward, as being supposed to yield an argument against immersion. I have mentioned those which are most relied on, and which look most plausible. And what do they amount to, when even cursorily examined? Remember, that it is necessary to find some case, in which the word not only *might*, but *must* have a different meaning. It is not enough to find passages in which some other idea would seem to you more appropriate, but to find one in which the established meaning of the word is quite impossible. If we abandon this great principle, all strict and sure interpretation of language comes to an end. And can it be said that the established meaning

of *baptizo*, viz.: immerse, and kindred expressions, is impossible because of the condition of the river Jordan, or the imagined scarcity of water at Jerusalem, or the immersion of cups and couches, or the baptism in the cloud and the sea, or the baptism in the Holy Spirit? You might prefer some other conception, but is the idea of immersion impossible in any of these cases? If not, it must stand.

Men who are determined to get rid of an unacceptable teaching can always raise some doubts as to the meaning of the plainest words. The Universalist works away at the word "everlasting," until some minds grow confused, and those who wish to agree with him are misled. The Unitarian insists that instead of "and the Word was God," it *might* be translated, "and God was the Word." The orthodox answer is that language is necessarily imperfect. If God has mercifully given a revelation in human language, we should accept and follow its plain teachings, and not try to gather doubt around them, in order to escape what we do not fancy. And just this is what we say about the word *baptize*.

V. Before closing this long discussion, it is

probably desirable to refer briefly to a new theory as to the act of baptism, put forward by Rev. Dr. Dale, a Presbyterian minister of Pennsylvania. In three volumes, and with great fulness of detail and elaborate ingenuity, he explains and defends his view, but the substance of his argument may be stated in comparatively few words.

As to the primary meaning of the word *baptizo*, Dr. Dale does not differ materially from Liddell and Scott. They say it means "to put in or under;" he says it is to put within, which he expresses by a manufactured word, "intuspose," compounded from the Latin, and signifying "put within." This definition of Dale, and of Liddell and Scott,* is doubtless more correct than that which has often been given, that the word primarily means "to dip frequently." But Dr. Dale goes on to insist that *baptizo* is always broadly different in its meaning from the

* Dr. Conant, in his treatise on BAPTIZEIN, has also given nearly the same definition: "In its literal use, it meant to put entirely into or under a liquid, or other penetrable substance, generally water, so that the object was wholly covered by the inclosing element."

simple word *bapto*, the basis on which it is formed; that *bapto* alone means to dip, and *baptizo never* signifies to dip, but only to put within, giving no intimation that the object is to be taken out again. *Bapto*, according to him, would put an object in water and quickly take it out; but *baptizo* would put it in, and so far as the meaning of the term is concerned, would leave it there.* Suppose it were granted that this was true; then we should have Christ commanding us to put men within or under the water, as a religious ceremony, and, because he does not expressly add that we are to take them out again, we should be bound, forsooth, to let them remain there. If any of my esteemed brethren of other denominations should take this view of the matter, and request me to "intuspose" them, to put them within the water, in the name of our Redeemer, it may be assumed that my common sense and humanity will cause me to take them

* Does the word "dip" in itself denote that the object is to be taken out? It is connected with *deep*, as the German *taufen* (the word for baptize) is with *tief*, and the Greek βαφ, the root of βάπτω, is with βαθ in βαθύς (which means deep). See Curtius, Griechische Etymologie, s. 416.

out again, as their own common sense and prudence will then lead them to go off and change their garments, without needing an express command in either respect. If, then, Dr. Dale were right in maintaining such a broad and invariable difference between *bapto* and *baptizo*, and right in advancing to maintain, laboriously and amusingly, a similar invariable difference between the English "dip" and "immerse," and between the Latin *tingo* and *mergo*, all this would leave the practical duty the same. Let it be granted that dip and immerse are not only sometimes different, but always broadly different in the way maintained, still a command to immerse men in water would be practically plain enough for all who are trying to learn their duty. So it would all amount to nothing.

But such a broad and invariable difference between *bapto* and *baptizo* does not exist, any more than between the English words or the Latin words mentioned. Without discussing the numerous passages involved in this question, I merely mention a single one. Plutarch uses *baptizo* where he describes the soldiers of Alexander, on a riotous march, as by the roadside

dipping (literally *baptizing*) with cups from huge wine-jars and mixing-bowls, and drinking to one another. Liddell and Scott say it here means *to draw* wine from bowls in cups, and add, "of course by dipping them." This is the obvious meaning, which no one can well mistake; and Dr. Dale's attempt to explain it away is simply amusing. Here, then, we have *baptizo* used precisely where Dr. Dale's theory would call for *bapto*. And there are numerous other cases, not always so obvious, but equally real.

It is a common tendency in language that a strengthened form of a word shall gradually take the place of the weaker. From *bapto*, to dip, came the verbal adjective *baptos*, dipt; and from this verbal adjective, by means of the termination *-izo*, was formed *bapt-izo*, which we may clumsily describe as primarily meaning to cause to be dipt, or to bring into a dipt condition, and may well enough render by put in, or under, or within. Being thus a stronger word, it is frequently used where the simple *bapto* would be less appropriate or less forcible. But by the tendency I have mentioned, the stronger word gradually came to be preferred to the weaker,

with no substantial difference of meaning. The same thing has happened, still more completely, with the words signifying to sprinkle. From *raino*, to sprinkle, came *rantos*, sprinkled; and upon this verbal adjective was formed *rant-izo*, which would thus mean to cause to be sprinkled, or to bring into a sprinkled condition. But, here there is never any practical difference in meaning between the simple and the derived form. In the classics we find only the simple *raino;* in later Greek writers and the Septuagint, both this and the stronger *rantizo;* in the New Testament, only *rantizo;* in modern Greek, both; and nowhere is any practical difference discernible. There are other examples of the same sort.* While *bapto* and *baptizo* did not (like

* *E. g.*, φαντάζομαι, αἱρετίζω. The frequentative sense in which some verbs, as ῥιπτάζω, κυπτάζω, is probably derivative from the causative or active sense described above. Another derivation would be the intensive sense, where the termination is frequently appended, not to the stem of the verbal adjective, but to the simple verb root, as in αἰτέω, "ask," αἰτίζω, "beg;" ἕρπω, "crawl," ἑρπύζω, "creep." Curtius gives some indirect support to this view (Griech. Etym., s. 553–5), but the terminations in ζω have never been thoroughly studied

raino and *rantizo*) become identical in meaning, but each has uses of its own, yet the stronger word came to be frequently employed in substantially the same sense as the weaker, seeing that the natural and common way of bringing a thing into a dipt condition is to dip it.

Thus far, then, Dr. Dale has made no important addition to our knowledge of the primary meaning of *baptizo*. He deserves the credit of having brought out that meaning more clearly than others, though he has not perceived its connection with the etymology. His attempt to establish a broad and invariable difference in meaning between it and the simple form *bapto* is a mistake, and even if he were right, it would make no practical difference as to the duty enjoined by *baptizo*. His elaborate efforts to show that Baptist writers, of different generations and countries, have differed in their views as to the mere *theory* of the word, prove nothing as to the real question at issue.

But Dr. Dale now takes an additional step which is novel and surprising. In the first place he confounds the literal and figurative uses of the term in question, and substantially claims

that in the literal use it can have no more definite sense than it has in the figurative—a process destructive of all exact interpretation. He then attempts to show that the word is used in three different senses: first, intusposition without influence, as when a stone is intusposed in water; second, intusposition with influence, as when a man is intusposed in water, and—not being taken out—is drowned; third, influence without intusposition, so that whatever controllingly influences a thing, may be said to baptize it. This last can only be called a figment of Dr. Dale's fancy. By the same sort of process I could reduce to a nebulous condition the meaning of any word whatever. Anything which controllingly influences an object so as to change its condition, may be described as baptizing that object. Thus, if I should set fire to this piece of paper and change it to ashes, I should be baptizing it. If I hang a man, or stab him, or poison him, or corrupt his morals, I baptize him. This fanciful notion he attempts to support by a mass of painstaking, but utterly wild interpretation, such as can only excite one's astonishment.

And the grand result of his whole discussion

is, if possible, still more wonderful. Beginning with the position that baptize means immerse, he ends by maintaining that *immersion is not baptism.* This surpasses the jugglers. Here is the word baptize meaning immerse, or if you prefer it, intuspose; now a few passes of logical and philological slight of hand, and behold immersion, or intusposition, is not baptism at all. If you feel inclined to say the force of absurdity could no further go, be not too fast, for Dr. Dale, apparently fascinated by his fancies, has in his most recent production practised an utter *reductio ad absurdum* upon his own theory. Our blessed Lord speaks of his dreadful sufferings as a baptism, and also speaks of them as drinking a cup; and Dr. Dale deliberately infers that *drinking a cup is baptism.* I cannot hold this up to the sheer ridicule it deserves, because the subject is too sacred.

I have thus endeavored to show that the plain teaching of our English Bible, supported by the highest authorities as to Greek scholarship, and by the testimony and practice of the living Greeks, cannot be set aside either by the author-

ity of "the church," the opinions of eminent individuals, or our own notions of convenience, nor yet by the attempts to establish a sacred, as quite different from the classical, sense of the term involved, nor by the strange and wild notions of a recent writer.

And now, this protracted discussion shall close with a single remark. I have spoken long and earnestly of a controverted question, one of those which divide Christians. But I am a rejoicing believer in Christian Union. It is too common to speak of this as having no actual existence; to speak dolefully of our Lord's prayer, "That they all may be one," as not at all fulfilled. Certainly it is not completely fulfilled in the present state of things; but it is fulfilled as really, and in as high a degree, as the prayer which precedes it, "Sanctify them through thy truth." Christ's people are by no means completely sanctified, yet they are sanctified; and though not completely one, yet they are one All who are truly his are one in him. Not only those belonging to what we call evangelical denominations, but many Romanists, for there are doubtless lovers of Christ among them, as there

have been in past ages; and many of the Greek Church; and perhaps some Universalists, and Unitarians, possibly even Mormons; and Quakers, who reject all water baptism; and some who from mistaken views neglect to make any profession of faith, or as the phrase is, do not join any church;—whoever and wherever they may be, though many of their opinions be erroneous and their practices wrong, yet if they are truly Christ's people they are truly one in him. Let nothing prevent us from clinging to this great fact, and rejoicing in the thought of Christian unity. But assuredly it is desirable—eminently, unspeakably desirable—to have *more* of union, both in spirit and in organization. We who believe in the Bible ought to be standing together against the bold and arrogant infidelity which is coming in like a flood; we who are called Protestants ought to be laboring together against the aggressions of Romanism, which seeks to gain compensation in America for what it has lost in Europe. Now such completer union, of spirit and of organization, is possible only on Scriptural grounds; only by taking the Bible as our sole authority, and the Bible as being a

book for the people, in its plain meaning. All Christians, except the Quakers, make baptism a condition of church membership. And for the sake of a more complete and efficient Christian union, we urge upon our fellow Christians, as the plain teaching of God's word, that there is no baptism where there is not an immersion.

I close with the Apostle's words, "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."

THE END.

THE

DUTY OF BAPTISTS

TO TEACH

THEIR DISTINCTIVE VIEWS.

BY

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THE DUTY OF BAPTISTS

TO TEACH

THEIR DISTINCTIVE VIEWS.

"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."—MATT. xxviii. 20.

THE things he had commanded include the internal and the external elements of Christian piety. Of the latter, they include ethical instruction and directions as to the conduct of Christian societies. These directions were afterward supplemented by the inspired apostles giving instructions as to the constitution and government of the Christian societies, or churches, and the characteristic ceremonies they were to observe. These matters pertaining to the Christian societies are certainly not so important as the internal and spiritual elements of piety or as ethical principles and precepts, but still they are important. We may be sure they are, from the fact that Christ and his apostles gave direction concerning them; and we can see why they must be important. It is impossible to maintain mental health if the body be abused or neglected, for

bodily conditions react upon those of the mind. And the externals of piety are the natural expression of its spiritual essence, which cannot be healthy if they are disregarded, exaggerated, or perverted. The tendency of human nature is usually not to neglect religious externals, but to exaggerate or pervert them. The New Testament gives us a very simple pattern in these respects—simple organization, simple government, simple ceremonies. But men early began to magnify their importance and to change their character and application.

EARLY JUDAIZERS AND THEIR SUCCESSORS.

Did you ever consider what became of the Judaizers who gave Paul so much trouble? When we last observe them in the history, in connection with Paul's latest recorded visit to Jerusalem, they are really beaten, but still numerous and active. When, in the second century, we again get a clear view of the early Christians, the Judaizers seem reduced to a mere handful. But has the tendency really disappeared? Nay; it is beginning to strike through and through the Christianity of the day, and from that time onward a painfully large portion of Christendom has had only a Judaized Christianity. When men began to exaggerate the importance of externals, they would soon begin to change their character

Coming to believe that baptism brings regeneration and is indispensable to salvation, they would of course wish to baptize as early in life as possible, and to make baptism practicable for the sick and the dying. Beginning to fancy that the bread and wine really became the glorified body and blood of the ascended Saviour, they not unnaturally took to withholding the cup from the laity, lest their awkward handling should spill some drops of the sacred fluid, which would have been profanation. And, in addition to these tendencies, the institutions of imperial Rome and the Roman genius for centralized government led the Christians to think it necessary that their societies should have a stronger government.

THE BAPTISTS OPPOSED TO JUDAIZING INFLUENCES.

In opposition to all this, Baptists insist on holding to the primitive constitution, government, and ceremonies of the Christian societies, or churches; and this on the principle of recognizing no religious authority but the Scriptures themselves, and of strictly observing all that the Saviour has commanded. Now, the Saviour says in our text that we must *teach* them to observe all things whatsoever he commanded. These commandments include the matters just mentioned, concerning which the people who allow

themselves to be called Baptists differ widely from large portions of the Christian world, and are persuaded that their own views are more scriptural, more in accordance with the Saviour's commands. They must therefore feel themselves required to *teach* these things as well as others Hence, the text lays upon us the duty of which I have been requested to speak—*the duty of Baptists to teach their distinctive views.*

DISTINCTIVE VIEWS OF BAPTIST CHURCHES.

It may be well to state briefly what I understand to be the leading distinctive views of the Baptist churches. The fact that certain of these are more or less shared by others will be remarked upon afterward.

(1) We hold that the Bible alone is a religious authority; and in regard to Christian institutions the direct authority is of course the New Testament.

(2) We hold that a Christian Church ought to consist only of persons making a credible profession of conversion, of faith in Christ. These may include children, even comparatively young children, for God be thanked that these do often give credible evidence of faith in Christ! But in the very nature of the case they cannot include infants. The notion that infants may be church-members because their parents are seems

to us utterly alien to the genius of Christianity, not only unsupported by the New Testament, but in conflict with its essential principles; and we are not surprised to observe that our Christian brethren among whom that theory obtains are unable to carry it out consistently—unable to decide in what sense the so-called "children of the church" are really members of the church and subject to its discipline. The other notion, that infants may be church-members because so-called "sponsors" make professions and promises for them, seems to us a mere legal fiction, devised to give some basis for a practice which rose on quite other grounds. Maintaining that none should be received as church-members unless they give credible evidence of conversion, we also hold in theory that none should be retained in membership who do not lead a godly life; that if a man fails to show his faith by works, he should cease to make profession of faith. Some of our own people appear at times to forget that strict church discipline is a necessary part of the Baptist view as to church-membership.

(3) We hold that the officers, government, and ceremonies of a Christian society, or church, ought to be such, and such only, as the New Testament directs. As to ceremonies, it enjoins the very minimum of ceremony; for there are but two, and both are very simple in nature and

in meaning. We insist that baptism ought to be simply what Christ practised and commanded. We care nothing for the mode of baptism, the manner of baptizing, if only there is a real baptism according to the plain indications of Scripture. As to the significance of the ceremony, we understand it to involve three things: The element employed represents purification; the action performed represents burial and resurrection, picturing the burial and resurrection of Christ, and symbolizing the believer's death to sin through faith in Christ and his resurrection to walk in newness of life; and performing the ceremony in the name of the Lord Jesus—in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost—makes it like an oath of allegiance, a vow of devotion, to Jesus Christ, to the Triune God. The early Roman Christians had a good word for this idea if only the word could have remained unchanged in use: they called it a *sacramentum*, a military oath. As the Roman soldier in his oath bound himself to obey his general absolutely so in baptism we solemnly vow devotion and obedience. But, alas! the word "sacrament," like many another word in Christian history, has come to be employed in senses quite foreign to its original use. As to the second Christian ceremony, we hold that not only the bread, but the cup also should be given, urging, as all Protestants do—

and Baptists are Protestants in one sense, though in another sense distinct from Protestants—that our Lord commanded us to do both, and no one has a right to modify his commands. And the significance of the bread and wine is understood by us to be, not transubstantiation, nor consubstantiation, nor real presence in any sense, nor even according to the Calvinian view that a special spiritual blessing is by divine appointment attached to the believing reception of these elements, but simply according to the Zwinglian view that these are mementoes, remembrancers of Christ, and that, taking them in remembrance of him, we may hope to have the natural effects of such remembrance blessed to our spiritual good. As to the order of the two ceremonies, we believe the New Testament to indicate that the second should be observed only by those who have previously observed the first and are walking orderly. This is in itself not a distinctive view of the Baptists, for they share it with almost the entire Christian world in all ages. The combination of this general Christian opinion, that the New Testament requires baptism to precede the Lord's Supper, with our Baptist opinion as to what constitutes baptism, leads to a practical restriction which many regard as the most marked of all our distinctive views; while for us it is only an incidental, though logically inevitable,

result of that principle which we share with nearly all of those from whom it ceremonially separates us.

(4) We hold that these societies called churches were designed, as shown in the New Testament, to be independent. They have no right to control one another. Ample warrant there is for co-operation in benevolence and for consultations as to questions of truth and duty, but without assuming to legislate or in any sense to rule one another. And they must be independent of what we call the State as to their organization, faith, worship, and discipline, while, of course, amenable to the State if they violate those moralities which are essential to public welfare; nor must they suffer themselves to be dependent on the State in the sense of receiving from it pecuniary support.

Now, I repeat that we do not consider these externals to be intrinsically so important as the spiritual, or even the ethical, elements of Christianity. But they are important, because they express the spiritual and react upon it healthily or hurtfully, and because the Author of Christianity, in person or through his inspired apostles, appointed and commanded them. And we think it a matter of great importance that they should be practised in accordance with, and not contrary to, his appointment—that, in the language of his

text, his disciples should observe and conserve (for the word includes both ideas) all things whatsoever he commanded them.

We are glad that as to one or another of these distinctive views some of our fellow-Christians of other persuasions agree with us more or less. We welcome all such concurrence, and it is not now necessary to inquire whether they hold those opinions with logical consistency. For ourselves, we do not claim to be fully *acting* upon these views, but we aim to do so, acknowledge ourselves blameworthy in so far as we fail; and we desire, notwithstanding our shortcoming in practice, to hold them up in due prominence before ourselves and others.

I wish now, first, to present reasons why Baptists ought to teach their distinctive views, and then to remark upon means and methods of performing this duty.

I. REASONS WHY BAPTISTS OUGHT TO TEACH THEIR DISTINCTIVE VIEWS.

1. *It is a duty we owe to ourselves.* We must teach these views in order to be consistent in holding them. Because of these we stand apart from other Christians, in separate organizations—from Christians whom we warmly love and delight to work with. We have no right thus to stand apart unless the matters of difference have real import-

ance; and if they are really important, we certainly ought to teach them. We sometimes venture to say to our brethren of some other persuasions that if points of denominational difference among evangelical Christians were so utterly trifling as they continually tell us, then they have no excuse for standing apart *from each other*, and no right to require us to stand apart from them unless we will abjure, or practically disregard, our distinctive views. But all this will apply to us likewise unless we regard the points of difference as having a substantial value and practical importance as a part of what Christ commanded, and in this case they are a part of what he requires us to teach.

And this teaching is the only way of correcting excesses among ourselves. Do some of our Baptist brethren seem to you ultra in their denominationalism, violent, bitter? And do you expect to correct such a tendency by going to the opposite extreme? You are so pained, shocked, disgusted, at what you consider an unlovely treatment of controverted matters that you shrink from treating them at all. Well, the persons you have in view, if there be such persons, would defend and fortify themselves by pointing at you. They would say, "I am complained of as extreme and bigoted. Look at those people yonder, who scarcely ever make the slightest allusion to cha-

racteristic Baptist principles, who are weak-kneed, afraid of offending the Pædobaptists, or dreadfully anxious to court their favor by smooth silence: do you want me to be such a Baptist as that?" Thus one extreme fosters another. The greatest complaint I have against what are called "sensational" preachers is not for the harm they directly do, but because they drive such a multitude of other preachers to the other extreme—make them so afraid of appearing sensational in their own eyes, or in those of some fastidious hearers, that they shrink from saying the bold and striking things they might say, and ought say, and become commonplace and tame. And so it is a great evil if a few ultraists in controversy drive many good men to avoid sensitively those controverted topics which we are all under obligation to discuss. The only cure, my brethren, for denominational ultraism is a healthy denominationalism.

2. *To teach our distinctive views is a duty we owe to our fellow-Christians.* Take the Roman Catholics. We are often told very earnestly that Baptists must make common cause with other Protestants against the aggressions of Romanism. It is urged, especially in some localities, that we ought to push all our denominational differences into the background and stand shoulder to shoulder against Popery. Very well; but all the time it seems to us that the best way to meet and with-

stand Romanism is to take Baptist ground; and if, in making common cause against it, we abandon or slight our Baptist principles, have a care lest we do harm in both directions. Besides, ours is the best position, we think, for winning Romanists to evangelical truth. Our brethren of the great Protestant persuasions are all holding some "developed" form of Christianity — not so far developed as Popery, and some of them much less developed than others, but all having added something, in faith or government or ordinances, to the primitive simplicity. The Roman Catholics know this, and habitually taunt them with accepting changes which the church has made while denying the church's authority, and sometimes tell them that the Baptists alone are consistent in opposing the church. We may say that there are but two sorts of Christianity—church Christianity and Bible Christianity. If well-meaning Roman Catholics become dissatisfied with resting everything on the authority of the church and begin to look toward the Bible as authority, they are not likely, if thoughtful and earnest, to stop at any halfway-house, but to go forward to the position of those who really build on the Bible alone.

Or take the Protestants themselves. Our esteemed brethren are often wonderfully ignorant of our views. A distinguished minister, author

of elaborate works on church history and the creeds of Christendom, and of commentaries, etc., and brought in many ways into association with men of all denominations, is reported to have recently asked whether the Baptists practise trine immersion. A senator of the United States from one of the Southern States, and alumnus of a celebrated university, was visiting, about twenty years ago, a friend in another State, who casually remarked that he was a Baptist. "By the way," said the senator, "what kind of Baptists are the Pædobaptists?" Not many years ago a New York gentleman who had been United States minister to a foreign country published in the New York *Tribune* a review of a work, in which he said (substantially), "The author states that he is a Baptist pastor. We do not know whether he is a Pædobaptist or belongs to the straiter sect of Baptists." Now, of course these are exceptional cases; but they exemplify what is really a widespread and very great ignorance as to Baptists. And our friends of other denominations often do us great injustice because they do not understand our tenets and judge us by their own. As to "restricted communion," for example, Protestants usually hold the Calvinian view of the Lord's Supper, and so think that we are selfishly denying them a share in the spiritual blessing attached to its observance; while, with our Zwinglian view,

we have no such thought or feeling. These things certainly show it to be very desirable that we should bring our Christian brethren around us to know our distinctive opinions, in order that we may at least restrain them from wronging us through ignorance. If there were any who did not care to know, who were unwilling to be deprived of a peculiar accusation against us, with them our efforts would be vain. But most of those we encounter are truly good people, however prejudiced, and do not wish to be unjust; and if they will not take the trouble to seek information about our real views, they will not be unwilling to receive it when fitly presented. Christian charity may thus be promoted by correcting ignorance. And besides, we may hope that some at least will be led to investigate the matters about which we differ. Oh that our honored brethren would investigate! A highly-educated Episcopal lady some years ago, in one of our great cities, by a long and patient examination of her Bible, with no help but an Episcopal work in favor of infant baptism, at length reached the firm conviction that it is without warrant in the Scripture, and became a Baptist. She afterward said, "I am satisfied that thousands would inevitably do likewise if they would only examine."

But why should we wish to make Baptists of our Protestant brethren? Are not many of them

noble Christians—not a few of them among the excellent of the earth? If with their opinions they are so devout and useful, why wish them to adopt other opinions? Yes, there are among them many who command our high admiration for their beautiful Christian character and life; but have a care about your inferences from this fact. The same is true even of many Roman Catholics, in the past and in the present; yet who doubts that the Romanist system as a whole is unfavorable to the production of the best types of piety? And it is not necessarily an arrogant and presumptuous thing in us if we strive to bring honored fellow-Christians to views which we honestly believe to be more scriptural, and therefore more wholesome. Apollos was an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures, and Aquila and Priscilla were lowly people who doubtless admired him; yet they taught him the way of the Lord more perfectly, and no doubt greatly rejoiced that he was willing to learn. He who tries to win people from other denominations to his own distinctive views *may* be a sectarian bigot; but he may also be a humble and loving Christian.

3. *To teach our distinctive views is a duty we owe to the unbelieving world.* We want unbelievers to accept Christianity; and it seems to us they are more likely to accept it when presented in its primitive simplicity, as the apostles themselves

offered it to the men of their time. For meeting the assaults of infidels, we think our position is best. Those who insist that Christianity is unfriendly to scientific investigations almost always point to the Romanists; they could not with the least plausibility say this of Baptists. And when an honest and earnest-minded sceptic is asked to examine with us this which claims to be a revelation from God, we do not have to lay beside it another book as determining beforehand what we must find in the Bible. Confessions of faith we have, some older and some more recent, which we respect and find useful; but save through some exceptional and voluntary agreement we are not bound by them. We can say to the sceptical inquirer, "Come and bring all the really ascertained light that has been derived from studying the material world, the history of man, or the highest philosophy, and we will gladly use it in helping to interpret this which we believe to be God's word;" and we can change our views of its meaning if real light from any other sources requires us to do so. There is, surely, in this freedom no small advantage for attracting the truly rational inquirer. But, while thus free to search the Scriptures, Baptists are eminently conservative in their whole tone and spirit; and for a reason. Their recognition of the Scriptures alone as religious authority, and the stress they lay on exact conformity to the re-

quirements of Scripture, foster an instinctive feeling that they must stand or fall with the real truth and the real authority of the Bible. The union of freedom and conservatism is something most healthy and hopeful.

4. There is yet another reason—one full of solemn sweetness: *To teach our distinctive views is not only a duty to ourselves, to our fellow-Christians, and to the unbelieving world, but it is a duty we owe to Christ; it is a matter of simple loyalty to him.* Under the most solemn circumstances he uttered the express injunction. He met the eleven disciples by appointment on a mountain in Galilee; probably the more than five hundred of whom Paul speaks were present also: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and disciple all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." The things of which we have been speaking are not, we freely grant, the most important of religious truths and duties, but they are a part of the all things which Jesus commanded; what shall hinder us, what could excuse us, from observing them ourselves and teaching them to others? The Roman soldier who had taken the *sacramentum* did not then go a-picking and choosing among the orders of his

general: shall the baptized believer pick and choose which commands of Christ he will obey and which neglect and which alter? And, observe, I did not quote it all: Go, disciple, baptizing them, "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Shall we neglect to teach as he required, and then claim the promise of his presence and help and blessing?

II. MEANS AND METHODS OF PERFORMING THIS DUTY.

1. *One of the best means of teaching our distinctive views to others is the thorough instruction of our own people.* Brethren of other persuasions need not be repelled or offended if they find us taking suitable occasion in pulpit discourses to teach our young members what Baptists believe, and why. If they perceive we are not striking at them through our members, but in simplicity and sincerity are feeding our flock, they may even listen with interest. And then, if they choose to take these things to themselves of their own accord and on their own responsibility, why, all the better, of course. But our young members greatly need such instruction for their own sakes, and it is often grievously neglected. On a recent occasion a cultivated young lady stated that she had never [illegible]

her life heard a word from the pulpit as to the relation between baptism and the Lord's Supper, and yet she was the daughter of a well-known Baptist minister, and her pastors had been men of marked ability and earnest Baptists. Do you think it a rare case? You can find such by thousands. And we ought to teach these things, in their measure, not only to our young members, but at home to the youth of our families. Suffer another fact for illustration: I once knew a lad of sixteen, well educated for his years, whose father was a zealous and quite influential Baptist layman and his pastor an able and eloquent minister The boy had been baptized, and with great joy and trembling had sat by his father's side and taken bread and wine in remembrance of Jesus. Some weeks later a Methodist preacher came through the country—a rare thing in that neighborhood—and after preaching he very tenderly invited all Christians to come to the Table of the Lord. The boy wanted to go, and knew of no reason why he should not, but thought he would wait till his older brother and sisters went forward; and, as they did not, he inquired on the way home why it was, and on reaching home asked his father about it. The argument was made plain enough, but it was all new to him. Pastors, parents, and all had never thought it necessary to explain that matter to anybody. I mention these

homely incidents with the hope of arousing such Baptists as my voice can reach to consider how it may be in their homes and their churches. Nor should this instruction be neglected in our Sunday-schools. The current lesson-system can, of course, make no immediate provision for such instruction, but it leaves ample room for it by giving lessons that embrace controverted matters, and it calculates that every denomination in its lesson-helps will explain these matters according to its views. It is clear, then, that Sunday-schools connected with Baptist churches ought to use Baptist helps for the study of the lesson. If some undenominational publications are so valuable for teachers as to be desired also, they ought to be used only in addition to those which explain according to Baptist beliefs. We do not withhold instruction in our Lord's other teachings till the pupil has become a believer, and why should we withhold it as to his commands regarding church-membership and ordinances?

Three benefits ought to follow from thus teaching our youth: *First*, it will restrain them from hereafter going to other denominations through ignorance. Some reasons for such change cannot be touched by instruction. But not a few take such a step because they were never taught the scriptural grounds for Baptist usage, and so they readily fall in with the plausible idea that "one

church is good as another if the heart is right." There can be no doubt that well-meaning persons have in this way been lost to us whom early instruction might have retained. *Secondly*, we may thus render them better Christians. I fully agree with an eminent Presbyterian minister who recently said, "We make people better Christians by making them better Presbyterians, better Methodists, Baptists, Episcopalians." There are some very excellent people in our time who think it a merit to be entirely undenominational, and who proclaim that they "love one church as well as another." But, where not deluded, such persons are few and quite exceptional; in general, the truest, most devoted, and most useful Christians are strong in their denominational convictions and attachments. I repeat, then, that by proper instruction in our distinctive views we shall really make our young people better Christians. And, *thirdly*, we thus prepare them to explain and advocate these views in conversation—a thing which is often called for, and when properly managed may be very useful.

2. *If actions speak louder than words, we may practically teach our distinctive views by everything that builds up our churches in Christian character and promotes their legitimate influence.* Baptists are in some respects placed at serious disadvantage in consequence of trying to do their duty.

They have not restricted their ministry to men who had a certain fixed grade of education, but have encouraged all to preach who felt moved to do so, and whom the churches were willing to hear. In this way they have greatly helped to meet the vast demand in our country, and have gained a powerful hold upon the masses. What would have become of the scattered millions in this new country had it not been for the Methodists, the Baptists, and some others who have pursued a like course? But the result is, that we have a great mass of comparatively uneducated ministers and members. Moreover, our Episcopal and Presbyterian brethren brought over the sea the social influence derived from an established church; and this social superiority they have easily maintained in many of our cities, particularly as their ministry was at the same time restricted to men having considerable education. The result is that, while Baptists have many families of excellent social position and influence, and many ministers of high cultivation, yet, in virtue of having a great number who are in these respects comparatively wanting, they have to bear, as a denomination, the odium of social and educational inferiority. I do not regret this as regards our past. I think our principle as to the ministry is right, and I rejoice that we have been able to take hold of the multitude. But we must strive

earnestly to better this situation in the future by steadily lifting up this great body of people as fast as we can. Whatever elevates the educational condition of our denomination or gives more of social influence, provided this be not gained by worldly conformity, will help in securing respect and attention for our distinctive tenets. And a like effect will be produced by the increasing development of benevolence among our churches, and by a completer report of what is actually done.

3. *If we wish to teach our distinctive views to others, it is necessary to understand those whom we propose to reach.* I remember a teacher of modern languages who would often elaborately explain some French or German or other idiom with which we had no difficulty at all, and then pass over as not needing explanation many a phrase we could not understand. He knew the language he was teaching, but was not well acquainted with the language of his pupils. If we would in any way teach effectively, we must know how things look to the persons addressed; we must get their point of view. Now, Baptists are not, on the whole, so ignorant of the denominational opinions of other Christians as they are of ours, because our circumstances have compelled us to give some attention to that matter. Yet we need a much better acquaintance with them if we

would speak to any purpose in public or private. I respectfully urge upon all ministers and upon intelligent private members of both sexes that they shall study, by reading and personal inquiry, each of the leading religious bodies with which they have to do—shall study them in three respects: (*a*) Inquire what are the characteristic peculiarities of this body of Christians differencing them from others, and if possible get at the fundamental opinions which account for these peculiarities. (*b*) Consider in what respects they particularly deserve our admiration and, with the necessary changes, our imitation. Each denomination emphasizes certain aspects of truth or departments of duty, and will in regard to these present us a very instructive and inspiring model. (*c*) Strive to ascertain how they regard our tenets, practices, and spirit—what things in us they especially dislike, and with what they might easily feel sympathy.

Such inquiries will help us in several ways. They may restrain the tendency to react from what we regard as the errors of others into an opposite extreme, as Protestants have done with reference to some errors of Popery, and many Baptists with reference to prelatical or pastoral domination, to clerical support, etc. They may check the unconscious adoption or imitation of opinions, sentiments, or phrases which are incon

sistent, or at least incongruous, in us. We rejoice in that "progress of Baptist principles" among Pædobaptists which Dr. Curtis's book so well describes, and perhaps fail to inquire whether there be not a counter-influence which deserves attention, and which may not be wholly beneficial. And then this study of other denominations will enable us better to adapt ourselves to those whom we would influence. When you address to Methodists an article suited to High Churchmen, or *vice versâ*, what in the world are you thinking about?

4. *We should study the wise treatment of controverted topics.* Upon this point I venture to offer several practical suggestions for what they are worth.

(*a*) Years ago I asked the now lamented Dr. Jeter how he managed about matters in dispute between us and other denominations. His reply was, in substance, "I never go out of my way to avoid such topics, and never go out of my way to find them. When naturally suggested by my subject or the circumstances, I speak of them, and I try to speak without timid fear of giving offence, and without fierce vehemence, as if taking hostility for granted, but just treating these matters, so far as I can, in the same tone with which I speak of other things." This seemed to me then, and still seems, an admirable statement of

the course it is generally best to pursue. Some are constantly going out of their way to find such topics through a bred-and-born love of controversy or a mistaken judgment as to its necessity and benefits. Others go out of their way to avoid all disputed questions, and want nothing to do with controversy of any kind. This latter class might be advised to study the history and recorded writings of a man named Paul. He did not shrink from controversy. Yea, and his Master and ours is polemical on every page of his recorded discourses, always striking at some error or evil practice of the people around him.

(*b*) Dr. Jeter's plan may further suggest—what I think is true—that it is commonly better to treat these topics as they occur in our ordinary discourses. Set sermons have certain advantages; even public debates may still be useful in some few quarters, though most of us think their day of usefulness in this country is passed. But set sermons forewarn our hearers holding different opinions to come with armor buckled and visor closed, watching that no shaft shall reach them; while some excellent people take them as an invitation to stay away. They are no doubt sometimes appropriate and helpful, but in general the other course can scarcely fail to prove best.

(*c*) I think it very undesirable to connect sharp polemics with the actual administration of ordi-

nances. Do not go into a defence of our restriction of the Lord's Supper when about to take the bread and wine. Whatever you can say will repel some hearers and deeply pain some others, while such a discussion can scarcely prove the best preparation for partaking. Try to bring out the sweet and blessed meaning of the ordinance and to observe it with unpretending reverence and solemnity, and it will itself teach all concerned. I think Baptists often mar the wholesome solemnity of this ordinance through the persuasion that they ought then and there to defend their restricted invitation. And when about to baptize, it is usually best simply to read the New-Testament passages which give the history and significance of the ordinance, and then with solemn prayer and a carefully-prepared and reverent administration of the rite to leave it and the Scripture to make their own impression. If an address or sermon be given to present the practical lessons of baptism, especially that we should walk in newness of life, that will be more seemly, and often more convincing, than to argue the proper subjects and proper action of baptism. Of course, any such suggestion as this must be subject to exception, but I am persuaded it will generally hold good.

(*d*) We should use mainly arguments drawn from the English Scriptures and from common experience or reflection; only occasionally those

which depend on learning. Scholarship is greatly to be desired in ministers—and may we have much more of it!—but the highest function of scholarship in preaching is to take assured results and make them plain to the general understanding, and certain thorough evidence which the unlearned can appreciate. If you pour a flood of learning about your hearer, and he remembers that two Sundays ago there was a torrent of learning from Dr. Somebody on the other side, then, as he does not understand and cannot judge, he is apt to conclude that he will not believe either of you. And do let us beware of using doubtful arguments as if they were conclusive.

(*e*) We may treat these subjects by other means as well as by preaching. Many opportunities will occur in conversation, for one who has a cultivated social tact and conversational skill, to relieve some prejudice, parry some thrust, or suggest some point for research or reflection, far more effectively than it can be done in the pulpit, and this without unpleasantly obtruding such subjects or in any wise violating the delicate proprieties of life. And carefully chosen tracts, books, or periodicals will often reinforce the sermon or conversation, or even reach some who would not listen to any public or private spoken words. We have already a great wealth of good literature of this kind, with which preachers and intelligent private members should make

themselves as thoroughly acquainted as possible, so that they may know how to select precisely the most suitable for every case—a matter of the very highest importance.

(*f*) We must always speak of controverted subjects in a loving spirit. Baptists occupy, of necessity, a polemical position; let us earnestly strive to show that it is possible to maintain a polemical position in the spirit of true Christian love. This is really good policy; and, what is ten thousand times more, it is right.

5. *Let us gladly co-operate with our fellow-Christians of other persuasions in general Christian work as far as we can without sacrificing our convictions.* Men who think ill of us are sometimes sorely perplexed. They say, "Look at these narrow-minded, bigoted 'close-communion' Baptists! How zealously they work in our union enterprise! how loving they seem to be! I don't understand it." It is well to increase this perplexity. At the same time, we must not allow our conscientious differences to be belittled. Sometimes in a union service you will hear a well-meaning and warm-hearted man begin to gush, till at length he speaks quite scornfully of the trifles that divide us. In such a case one must find some means of diverting the dear brother's mind to another topic, and either publicly or privately inform him that such talk will not quite do. Indeed, this is coming

to be better understood than was the case a few years ago. In Young Men's Christian Associations, for example, one seldom encounters now the unwise speeches in this respect that were once somewhat common. We must learn how to distinguish between abandonment of principles and mere practical concessions in order to conciliate—a distinction well illustrated for us in Acts xv. and in Paul's action as to Titus and Timothy. In the case of Titus the apostle would not yield an inch, would not give place for an hour, because a distinct issue of principle was made; and shortly after he voluntarily did, in the case of Timothy, what he had before refused, there being now no issue of principle. It may sometimes be difficult to make the distinction, but that is a difficulty we may not shirk. One of the great practical problems of the Christian life, especially in our times, is to stand squarely for truth and squarely against error, and yet to maintain hearty charity toward Christians who differ with us. This assuredly can be done. The very truest and sweetest Christian charity is actually shown by some of those who stand most firmly by their distinctive opinions.

6. *Finally, let us cultivate unity among ourselves.* The Baptists of this vast country are, in fact, united. Dr. Barnas Sears, who had exceptional opportunities of observing, spoke to me not long before his death of the fact that our theological

seminaries are all teaching the same doctrines without any central authority to keep them united. And the fact is more general. Apart from mere excrescences, American Baptists are wonderfully agreed—wonderfully, if you remember it as an agreement reached and maintained in perfect freedom. This unity becomes more manifest to any one in proportion as he gains a wider acquaintance. For example—pardon my taking local names to illustrate—there is many a brother in Mississippi with no knowledge of New England who, if he should spend a few weeks in Boston, would be astonished to find himself surrounded by real, right-down Baptists. And if some brethren in New England should go among those dreadful Landmarkers, whom they have seen so severely censured by newspapers that do not seem to know even the meaning of the term, they would conclude that most of the said Landmarkers are really very much like themselves, and not dreadful at all. Dr. Fuller was fond of giving a story told by William Jay. Mr. Jay walked out one day in a dense English fog. Presently he saw approaching him a huge and monstrous object that made him start. As they drew nearer together it assumed the shape of a gigantic man; and when they met, it was his own brother John.

And American Baptists are becoming more united just now. A few years ago there was in

some quarters a movement toward the propagation of "open communion" which at a distance awakened concern. But the estimable brethren engaged in that movement have gone in peace or have peacefully subsided into quiet. And in some other quarters ultraists are losing influence, and brethren who once followed them seem now disposed not at all to abandon any principle, but to avoid pushing differences among ourselves into an occasion of denominational disruption. So the general outlook is now very encouraging.

Let us cultivate, I say, this unity among ourselves. In order to do so, our watchwords must be freedom, forbearance, patience. There can be no constrained unity among us. The genius of our ideas and institutions quite forbids it. That newspaper, seminary, or society which undertakes to coerce American Baptists into unity will soon weary of the task. We must be forbearing and patient, and not discouraged by many things which under the circumstances are to be looked for. Competing journals and other institutions may get up an occasional breeze; each great city may show a too exclusive interest in societies there located: that is natural, if not wise; personal rivalries may sometimes curiously complicate themselves with questions of principle and of general expediency: it may cause regret, but need not cause wonder; East and West may pull apart in some respects,

and North and South; even the "celestial minds" of our noble women may not always perfectly agree about organizations; we co-operate fully in some matters, partially in some, perhaps work separately in others, yet with hearty fraternal kindness,—but let us cultivate freedom, forbearance, patience, and we shall be substantially united more and more.

This growing unity among ourselves gives us increasing power to impress our denominational opinions upon others; and the more zealously we strive to teach our distinctive views to others, the more we shall become united among ourselves.

Pedobaptists not Open Communionists.

A

DEFENCE

OF

RESTRICTED COMMUNION,

Revised and Enlarged:

WITH

AN APPENDIX ON THE NATURE OF A GOSPEL CHURCH.

BY REV. S. REMINGTON, A. M.,

AUTHOR OF "REASONS FOR BECOMING A BAPTIST."

PHILADELPHIA:

AMERICAN BAPTIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY,

1420 CHESTNUT STREET.

ADVERTISEMENT.

TWENTY-ONE thousand copies of this little work have been already circulated in its original form, and the evidences of its usefulness are abundant. As the demand for it is steadily increasing, it has been thoroughly revised by the Author, enriched with several important additions, and enlarged by a valuable Appendix on the Nature of a Regular Gospel Church. Thus improved, it has been stereotyped anew by the American Baptist Publication Society; and although enlarged more than one fourth, it is still sold at the original price of six cents a copy, to encourage its wider circulation and more extensive usefulness.

The Author's preceding work, "Reasons for becoming a Baptist," of which 32,000 copies have been printed, has recently been translated into the French and German; and this work also is demanded, and will soon be issued in the German language. Together or apart, they present very concise and correct views of the scriptural practice of Baptist churches in regard to Baptism and the Lord's Supper—the very views by which the Author himself was convinced, and which, by the Divine blessing, have been successful in convincing many others. J. N. B.

PHILADELPHIA,
August 10, 1852.

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PREFACE.

THERE is nothing that is *considered* peculiar to the Baptist denomination, which its ministers and members have to meet so frequently, as the charge of "*close communion.*" We often hear this phrase pronounced in a satirical tone, and with an air of contempt, which seems to imply that we arrogate to ourselves a peculiar sanctity, as if we said to our brethren of other churches—"Stand off, I am more holy than thou."

The writer of the following Treatise has been a minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church for nearly a score of years; and having been stationed during that time in eight different cities, besides country villages and towns, (and a member of three different Annual Conferences,) his acquaintance with the ministry and membership of that church is very extensive.

Although he dissolved his connection with that church because of a change of theological views, as the little work which he published, entitled, "REASONS FOR BECOMING A BAPTIST," will show, and not because he was disaffected toward his brethren; yet has he had to meet at almost every turn, where he has met them, the popular charge of contractedness in Christian charity. "Will you eat and drink with us?" is a question of almost every day occurrence, accompanied sometimes with—"I don't like the Baptists, because of their close communion."

To such interrogations and declarations, the writer, as a matter of course, would be expected to reply, which he has

done to such as he believed would listen with candor; and en deavored to show that Baptists, in this matter, are actuated by *principle*, and not by prejudice, bigotry, or a want of Christian affection toward the disciples of Christ, of whatever name or denomination.

But still he felt the want of a work directly in point, to meet such objectors. For certain is he, that multitudes are kept from uniting with Baptist churches, by misunderstanding this question. Booth, Howell, Cone, Andrew Fuller, G. F. Davis, and others, have written ably upon this subject; (and he would commend their works to the perusal of all inquirers after truth;) still they are either too large or too small exactly to meet the thing at which he has been aiming. He therefore feels that if he can so far awaken inquiry on this subject, as to lead our Pedobaptist brethren to read those works, he has not labored in vain.

What seemed to the writer of these sheets to be at this time most needed, was a work that would tend to silence this clamor of Pedobaptists, by showing that they themselves are *not* open communionists, and that it is not possible for them to be so and maintain church order and discipline; also, at the same time, to vindicate Baptists as being *scriptural* in their practice of restricted communion, and not thereby justly liable to the charge of bigotry.

How far he has accomplished this object, the reader must be the judge. To his candid and prayerful consideration are the thoughts spread out upon the following pages commended, with sincere and earnest prayer to God that the reader and writer may be guided into all truth.

S. REMINGTON.

New York, August 10, 1847.

A DEFENCE

OF

RESTRICTED COMMUNION.

CHAPTER I.

THE POINT EXPLAINED.

CLOSE COMMUNION is the popular phrase used by Pedobaptists, by which they designate what they deem the PECULIAR views and practice of the Baptists with regard to the proper recipients of the Lord's Supper.

It is, however, an important question, whether the phrase is justifiable—whether it does not imply more than is really intended and properly inferred from the practice of the churches to which it is applied.

If it necessarily means *Christian* communion only with the members of Baptist churches who adopt the principles which give rise to it, then certainly we ought to disclaim it; inasmuch as we rejoice to believe that there are genuine Christians in all the evangelical churches, for whom we not only entertain the highest respect, but sincere Christian affection and fellowship.

The question, then, may be asked, "Why not commune together at THE LORD'S TABLE?" This question is by no means novel; and to the minds of many, who may not have carefully examined the principles on which Baptists ground their practice in this particular, it may appear to imply an inconsistency, irreconcilable with our professions of CHRISTIAN fellowship for all the lovers of the blessed Jesus.

In the examination of this subject, I may be permitted to inquire, whose fault is it that we do not sit down together at the same Table? Is it the fault of the Baptist churches, or is it the fault of the Pedobaptists?

In view of this question, I shall state some of the prominent points upon which we agree, and one in particular upon which we differ,—and which one constitutes the barrier to the fellowship enjoyed by churches in the communion of the Lord's Supper.

1. We agree that Baptism is an institution of Christ; that it is a duty enjoined upon all Christians to be baptized; and, though it be not a saving ordinance, yet it cannot be wilfully omitted without disobedience to the requirements of the gospel.

2. We agree that it is the visible line of distinction between the kingdom of Christ and this world, and consequently that it is the door of admission into the visible church of Jesus Christ.

3. We agree that it is one of the essential requisites of an admission to the Lord's Table, and that none, however pious, ought to be permitted to enjoy this holy ordinance previous to a compliance with this Christian rite

These points of agreement are so obvious, that it

would appear to be needless for me to quote authorities by which to prove them. It would seem to be time enough to do this, when it is affirmed to the contrary. The fact is, that the practice of all the Pedobaptist churches is founded upon the admission of this principle: none are admitted to the Lord's Table until they become members of a Christian church, and none are recognized members of a Christian church without having been first baptized.

This is as it should be; and this practice is sanctioned by the New Testament Scriptures. We there learn that Baptism was instituted before the Lord's Supper, and that it was the invariable practice of the inspired apostles to baptize all believers before they admitted them to the Lord's Table, and that to this practice there is not a single exception on record. For proof, the reader is referred to the converts of Pentecost, recorded in Acts ii.; the Ethiopian eunuch, Acts viii.; Lydia and her household, and the Jailor and his household, Acts xvi.; Cornelius and his friends, Acts x.; and that of Saul, Acts ix. These were all baptized as soon as they believed, and not one of them enjoyed the communion of the Lord's Supper until after they had submitted to this ordinance.

Now if it were a matter of indifference whether they were baptized or not before they partook of the communion, we should naturally look for some examples. Ananias might have said to Saul, "Now, brother Saul, let us commemorate the sufferings and death of the blessed Saviour;" but did he? No. He said, "Arise and be baptized." Peter might have said to Cornelius and his friends, "Can any forbid these persons coming to the Table of the

Lord, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" but did he thus address them? No; but he said, "Can any forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" Paul might have said to the jailor, "In a most miraculous manner has God this night interposed and converted you and your family to himself, and let us now eat and drink together in the name of the Lord Jesus, as a token of our Christian love and fellowship;" but did he? Nay; he baptized "him and all his, straightway."

And why was this practice so *invariable?* Because it accorded with the Commission which they received from the Great Head of the Church, Matt. xxviii. 19, 20, and Mark xvi. 15, 16. The order of this Commission is, 1. Teach men the gospel plan of salvation; 2. Baptize all that believe; and 3. Then "teach them to observe all things whatsoever Christ has commanded you." Among the commands to be observed *after* baptism is, "This do in remembrance of me."

These passages set forth Baptism as a divinely appointed preliminary to the Lord's Supper; which has been so held in all ages since the days of Christ and his apostles, by all orthodox denominations.

Mr. Booth says, "Before the grand Romish apostasy, in the very depths of that apostasy, and since the Reformation, both at home and abroad, the general practice has been, to receive none but baptized persons to communion at the Lord's Table." This declaration of Mr. B. can be proved by an abundance of historical *data*, which sets the question under consideration beyond the power of successful contradiction.

JUSTIN MARTYR, A. D. 150, only about fifty years after the death of the apostle John, when speaking on this very subject, remarks: "This food is called by us the Eucharist, of which it is not lawful for any to partake, but such as believe the things that are taught by us to be true, and have been baptized."

JEROME, A. D. 400, says: "Catechumens cannot communicate at the Lord's Table, being unbaptized."

AUGUSTINE, A. D. 400, speaking of administering the Lord's Supper to infants, remarks, "Of which certainly they cannot partake unless they are baptized."

BEDE, A. D. 700, narrates the following incident: "Three young men, princes of the Eastern Saxons, seeing a Bishop administer the sacred supper, desired to partake of it as their royal father had done To whom the Bishop replied—If you will be baptized in the salutary fountain as your father was, you may also partake of the Lord's Supper as he did; but if you despise the former, ye cannot in any wise receive the latter."

THEOPHYLACT, A. D. 1100, testifies, that "no unbaptized person partakes of the Lord's Supper."

BONAVENTURE, about A. D. 1200, observes:—"Faith, indeed, is necessary to all the sacraments, but especially to the reception of baptism, because baptism is the first among the sacraments."

F. SPANHEIM, who flourished about A. D. 1600, asserts—"None but baptized persons are admitted to the Lord's Table."

Lord Chancellor KING, A. D. 1700, says: "Baptism was always the precedent to the Lord's

Supper; and none were admitted to receive the Eucharist till they were baptized. This is so obvious to every man that it needs no proof."

To further show that this doctrine, which is sanctioned by the Apostolical Fathers and the respectable writers quoted, is truly apostolical, we will apply the celebrated rule of Augustine as translated by DR. WALL:—"What the whole church through all the world does practise, and yet it has not been instituted by councils, but has always been in use, is, with very good reason, supposed to have been settled by authority of the Apostles." And what is this that he says is "supposed to have been settled by the authority of the Apostles?" Answer. "That they cannot partake of the Lord's Supper unless they are baptized." Hence, DR WALL boldly states—"No church ever gave the communion to any persons before they were baptized. AMONG ALL THE ABSURDITIES THAT EVER WERE HELD, NONE EVER MAINTAINED THAT ANY PERSONS SHOULD PARTAKE OF THE COMMUNION BEFORE THEY WERE BAPTIZED."

DR. MANTON'S testimony is—"None but baptized persons have a right to the Lord's Table."

DR. DODDRIDGE says—"It is certain that Christians in general have always been spoken of by the most ancient fathers as baptized persons. And it is also *certain* that, as far as our knowledge of primitive antiquity extends, no unbaptized person received the Lord's Supper."

DR. DWIGHT'S opinion, in connection with these decisive testimonies, is entitled to great weight. He says—"It is an indispensable qualification for this ordinance, that the candidate for communion

be a member of the visible church of Christ, in full standing. By this I intend, that he should be a person of piety; that he should have made a public profession of religion; and that he should have been baptized."

I will conclude this chapter with an extract from REV. ROBERT HALL, who, though a Baptist, was nevertheless favorable to open communion. He says—"Let it be admitted that baptism is, under all circumstances, a *necessary* condition of church-fellowship, and it is IMPOSSIBLE for the Baptists to act otherwise. The recollection of this may suffice to rebut the ridicule, and *silence the clamor* of those who loudly condemn the Baptists for a proceeding which, were they but to change their opinion on the subject of baptism, *their own principles* would *compel* them to adopt. They both concur in a common principle from which the practice deemed so offensive is the necessary result. Considered as an *argumentum ad hominem*, or an appeal to the avowed principles of our opponents, this reasoning may be sufficient to shield us from that severity of reproach to which we are often exposed, *nor ought we to be censured for acting upon a system which is sanctioned by our accusers.*"*

* In his "Short Statement," &c. *Hall's Works*, vol. ii. p. 213.

CHAPTER II.

THE REAL POINT OF DIFFERENCE.

We perceive then, that this view of the subject is common ground for both Baptists and Pedobaptists. It may then be asked, wherein do we differ? Answer. We differ as to what constitutes Christian Baptism. The argument properly turns upon *baptism*, and not upon restricted communion. We all agree that none but believers who have been baptized ought to be allowed to commune. The point at issue is, WHO HAVE BEEN BAPTIZED? Pedobaptists say "all infants or adult believers who have been immersed, poured, or sprinkled." The Baptists say, "none but immersed believers."

If the argument, then, turn upon this point, why censure the Baptists for carrying out a principle which all acknowledge to be scriptural? Why not let the objection be directed to the real question at issue? Or, in other words, why are the Pedobaptists always harping upon this string, when they themselves constantly carry out the same principle in their own recognition of proper subjects of the communion?

Some, probably, do not fully understand the ground upon which Baptists act in restricting the Lord's Supper to immersed believers; and there-

fore think them exceedingly bigoted and narrow in their Christian charity.

Others who understand the *principle* upon which Baptists act in this matter, it is to be feared, are themselves, to too great an extent, the victims of that bigotry which they so unsparingly charge upon us; and so they raise the cry of *close communion* as a denominational *ruse*, by which to represent us in a light repulsive to that catholic spirit which should characterize every true Christian.

"We are God's children," say they, "and we claim the right as such to sit down with you at his table; but you cut us off from this privilege; you lay restrictions upon God's table which the Master will not sanction." And all this is said by those who guard the Table of the Lord against the intrusions of all unbaptized persons.

Again, they charge us with robbing them of their privilege; and they ask, "How dare you rob the dear children of God of their privilege?" In reply, we ask, "What privilege?" Have you not the Lord's Supper in your own churches, and do you not enjoy that privilege as often as we do in our Baptist churches? If it were consistent for us to invite you to partake with us at the Lord's Table, how often, think you, would this privilege be enjoyed? How often do the different denominations of Pedobaptists commune with each other? For more than twenty-five years I was a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and never for once during all that time have I enjoyed the "privilege" of communing with any other denomination. It was not bigotry, nor a want of opportunity that prevented; nor did I for once think to reproach

myself with the idea, that I was voluntarily cutting myself off from the enjoyment of a great "privilege," for I had all the "privilege" I wanted at home in my own church.

A few weeks ago, in conversation with a preacher of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the following colloquy took place between us.

Preacher. "I wonder, Brother Remington, how you, who have always appeared to me to be so liberal towards all evangelical denominations, can subscribe to doctrines or views by which you are obliged to debar your brethren of other churches the privilege of eating and drinking with you."

R. "Let me ask you, my brother, how long have you been a member of the M. E. Church?"

Preacher. "Over twelve years."

R. "How many times have you communed with other denominations during that period?"

Preacher. "Let me think—upon my word I must confess—not once."

R. "What a privilege!"

Here our conversation on this topic ended. This is only one case among the multitude; and yet the unjust cry is continued, "You Baptists rob the children of God of their privilege."

Indeed, in these days, when Christians of all denominations are favored with churches and ordinances to suit their own peculiar views, the communion of the different denominations can scarcely be spoken of in the light of a "privilege." And I question whether it is so viewed by our Pedobaptist brethren when they seriously and candidly reflect upon it.

Sectarian zeal frequently carries good men quite

too far, and under its influence they often say and do things which, with a little reflection, they would not—could not conscientiously do. When I was the pastor of the Bromfield Street M. E. Church, in Boston, the Rev. Mr. R., a member of the New England Conference, visited the city and spent the Sabbath. He went to one of the Baptist churches in that city to hear the Rev. Mr.—; it was their ordinance Sabbath, and he remained with the church at the communion, when as he informed me, the following conversation, as near as I can recollect took place between him and Mr. C.

R. "My name is R. I am a member of a Christian church, and a minister of the gospel: will you permit me to sit down with you and your church at the Lord's Table?"

C. "Are you a Baptist?"

R. "No, sir. I am a Methodist, and a member of the N. E. Conference of ministers; and I should like, if agreeable, to commemorate the death and sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ with you."

C. "But, my brother, you must be baptized before you come with us to the Lord's Table;—and you know our principles, that we consider no baptism valid but immersion."

R. "True; but I have been immersed."

C. "Let me inquire, then, my brother, do you, both by precept and example, sanction immersion as the only gospel baptism?"

R. "O no, sir. I believe that a valid gospel baptism, may be performed by either sprinkling or pouring."

C. "I thought so; and you certainly know that, with such views and practice, we should make our-

selves very inconsistent to admit you to the communion with us."

R. "Brother C., this is a hard case."

C. "I know it, Brother R., but the remedy is at hand;—do and teach the commandments of Christ, and we shall rejoice to welcome you at his table."

Brother R. went away, not indeed sorrowful, for there were no less than six Methodist churches in that city, where he could, if he had desired it, have communed that day. I leave the reader to draw his own conclusions.

"It is a hard case," said a gentleman while listening to the above relation from Mr. R., "a hard case, indeed, to shut a man from the Lord's table whom we believe to be a real Christian." And in this he spoke what multitudes of others have said; but they have said it, as he did, more from impulse than sober reflection. For it is an undeniable fact that Pedobaptists, would do this same thing for which they so strongly censure us. To illustrate this, I will give the substance of a conversation which took place between an old and respectable Methodist brother of New York, and myself a few weeks ago. I will call him Brother L.

L. "The Methodist Conference is now in session in the Allen Street Church, and a great many of your old friends are there. I should think you would want to see them. Have you been there yet?"

R. "O yes, sir, several times; and I was much pleased to see them, and gave many of them a good hearty shake of the hand."

L. "Do you still believe them to be Christians and Christian ministers?"

R. "I know nothing to the contrary; and I am bound so to believe until I do."

L. "Should you have communion in your church during the session of the Conference, and these dear old friends and brethren of yours be present would you invite them to sit down with you at the table of the Lord?"

R. "Not because they were my personal friends, or even ministers of the gospel. There are three kinds of fellowship among Christians—Christian, Ministerial, and Church fellowship. The two former may be exercised without the latter, and the latter without either of the two former. I may fellowship you as a Christian, and them as Christian ministers, without any church fellowship. And, on the other hand, I may be obliged in some cases, to fellowship persons in the church with myself simply as members, not believing them to be genuine Christians."

L. "Then I understand you to say, that you would not let them come with you to the Lord's Table. Bigotry! bigotry! bigotry! How uncharitable and how antichristian. I pity you for your bigoted notions and your contracted Christian charity."

R. "You seem, my brother, to be very sincere, and I doubt not you feel a strong commiseration for me. Perhaps, however, I may relieve your mind a little if you will answer me a few questions. Allow me to ask, do you believe that God has any real Christians and Christian ministers among the Quakers, who were never baptized at all?"

L. "O yes, many. I have known some real converted souls among that people; and some who were excellent preachers, and called of God, in my humble opinion, to the work of the gospel ministry."

R. "Should any of these gospel ministers happen to be at your church at the time of the communion, and should ask to enjoy the privilege of going to the table with you, would the Methodists let them enjoy that privilege?"

L. "I suppose not."

R. "Why not? They are Christians and Christian ministers. And is it possible that *you* are so bigoted—so narrow in *your* Christian charity, as not to eat and drink with ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ just because they are Quakers and not Methodists? 'Bigotry! bigotry! bigotry!'"

L. "Why, as to that, Brother R., you know the reason. They have not been *baptized*, and it is contrary to the usages of our church to admit persons to the Table without it."

R. "So it seems, then, that you and I perfectly agree. You have admitted that these Quakers are entitled to Christian fellowship, for they are Christians—that they are entitled to ministerial fellowship, because they are ministers of the gospel; but that they are not entitled to *church* fellowship, because they were never admitted into the church in Christ's appointed way, namely, by Christian baptism. Now can you blame me for not having church fellowship with those whom I do not believe have any more obeyed Christ in his ordinance than these pious Quakers who discard baptism altogether?"

L. "Well, my brother, that does seem to present the matter to my mind in a new light. If you are right about baptism, I don't know as you are wrong about close communion; but I think you must be wrong about baptism."

R. "I think the fault lies in your refusal to submit implicitly to the example and precept of Christ, the gospel Lawgiver."

Thus ended the dialogue. And thus it always ends, when the principle which guides the Baptists in their views of communion is traced to its legitimate source.

I never was disposed to charge upon Baptists inconsistency with regard to this practice for which they are so much and so severely blamed. I always said that their conclusions were correctly drawn from the premises which they laid down. If they were right as to their views of baptism, then were they also right with regard to what is called close communion; and I acted accordingly, as the following incident will show.

When, some seven years ago, I was the pastor of the State Street M. E. Church, Troy, N. Y., a young convert applied to me for baptism. The following colloquy took place between us.

Young Convert. "I have called to see you, Mr. R., to tell you what God has recently done for my soul; and if you think proper, after you shall hear my story, I want you at a suitable time to baptize me." Here she related her Christian experience, and then said, "Now, sir, if you think me a proper person to belong to the church, I desire you to immerse me, for I do not believe that either sprinkling or pouring is baptism."

R. "What! do you not believe in sprinkling or pouring for others, if not for yourself? Do you not believe that either mode is sufficient, if it but answer a good conscience?"

Y. Convert. "No, sir. The Bible is my only guide, and I cannot see any other baptism but immersion there. I read in Matt. iii. 16—'And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water;' and Mark i. 9, says that 'Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized of John IN JORDAN.' And I read in Acts viii. 38, 39, 'And they went down both into the water, both Philip and the Eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were COME UP OUT OF THE WATER, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the Eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing.' I also read in Col. ii. 12, 'BURIED with him in baptism;' and in Rom. vi. 4, 'Therefore we are BURIED with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.' Here I have the EXAMPLE of CHRIST—that example copied by PHILIP and the EUNUCH—and the testimony of PAUL; for Paul must be speaking of immersion; for who ever heard of any person being BURIED in a few drops of water. I can't read any thing about sprinkling or pouring for baptism in the New Testament; and I therefore must believe that IMMERSION is the only true Christian baptism."

R. "Well, madam, if this is your opinion I cannot baptize you, because you are not a Methodist, but a Baptist"

Y. Convert. "I thought I was a Methodist. I

was converted among them, and love them; but I begin to think that you are right—that I am a Baptist."

R. "Let me explain, my young friend, so that you may see that it is consistency at which I am aiming, both for yourself and myself. You must already perceive the inconsistency of your being immersed, in our church, with your views. We believe that baptism is a prerequisite to the Lord's Supper, but according to your views of baptism I myself have never been baptized, for I have only been sprinkled, and that is also the fact with the majority of my church. How could you commune with an unbaptized minister and church?"

Y. Convert. "But don't you sometimes immerse?"

R. "Certainly I do; but it is only in those cases where the candidates prefer it for themselves but believe other modes equally valid to such as choose them."

Y. Convert. "Then I perceive that I am not a Methodist. I will take your advice and go to the Baptists."

CHAPTER III.

THE TWO SYSTEMS COMPARED.

In surveying this entire question as it lies between Baptists and Pedobaptists, I am obliged to come to the conclusion, that the principal difference between them in this matter is, that the Baptists adhere to the Bible and their creed, while the Pedobaptists discard both in this instance for the sake of open communion.

I acknowledge that this assertion seems severe, but only a glance at the grounds upon which it is founded, will show that such a conclusion is drawn from facts, as they appear in the premises.

A pious Scotchman, a few years ago, after enumerating all the different sects in Scotland, remarks, "Each of these sects is close communion in every sense of the word. They never partake of the Lord's Supper together; they all say, if we have reason to divide into different sects we cannot unite in the Lord's Supper, which is the most essential act of church fellowship."

The same may be said of the churches of England in the seventeenth century, in the days of Baxter, Charnock, Palmer, Saunders, Longly, Doolittle, Henry, Earl. &c.

And what shall we say of our own New England

Pedobaptist churches, who, in 1636, by force of arms, banished Roger Williams from Salem, Mass., for his principles; in 1639 fined the leading men who formed a little Baptist interest in Weymouth from 20s. to £20 each for the same thing, and threatened them with perpetual banishment if they persisted. Did it look like open communion in 1644, when they passed a law in Boston to banish all who openly condemned or opposed infant baptism? In 1643 seven men were tried, convicted, condemned, sent to prison, and put in irons in the city of Boston, and in 1644 were banished by order of the general court, and forbidden to return under the penalty of suffering death; and all this for the dreadful crime of being *Baptists*. In 1644, a poor man by the name of Painter, in Hingham, near Boston, was condemned, tied up and whipped, and for what? because he turned Baptist and refused to have his child sprinkled. In 1651, three Baptist clergymen in Lynn, a few miles east of Boston, were arrested while one was preaching on Lord's day, and sent to prison in Boston, where they lay two weeks, and were fined—one £30, one £20, and one £5, and sentenced to be publicly whipped if they refused to pay. How one got out, history informs us not; but of the other two we are informed that the fine of one was paid and that the other, Mr. Holmes, was cruelly *whipped*. Two men who were standing by, and witnessing this bloody scene, showed some signs of sympathy, which led the Pedobaptists to suspect them of being Baptists, and they were accordingly arrested, and each sentenced to pay 40*s*. and to be publicly whipped.

The poor Baptists, after enduring the most re-

lentless persecution, succeeded in building a church in Boston. But the Pedobaptists shut it up in 1680, and posted the following note upon the door: "All persons are to take notice, that by order of the COURT, the doors of this house are shut up; and that they are inhibited to hold any meeting, or to open the doors thereof without license from authority, till the GENERAL COURT take further order, as they will answer the contrary at their peril.

"Dated at Boston, 8th March, 1680.

"EDWARD RAWSON, *Secretary.*"

Between the years 1727 and 1733, there were twenty-eight Baptists, two Quakers, and two Episcopalians imprisoned at Bristol, Mass., (now R. I.) for Congregationalist ministers' tax. In 1770, about four hundred acres of land, belonging to the members of the Baptist church in Ashfield, were sold at auction by order of the Court, to pay the Congregational minister tax. "Nay, they sold their dead; for they sold their grave-yard. The orthodox minister was one of the purchasers." (See Minutes of the Philadelphia Association, page 116.)

In 1658, the court of New Haven, Conn., made a law *prohibiting all conversation* of the common people with any of those heretics, such as Quakers, Baptists, &c., and all persons from giving them any entertainment on the penalty of £5.

It is indeed painful to refer to such historical facts; but I do it that we may be able to test the practical influence of the doctrine which we are defending. We are charged with being bigoted and narrow, and confined in our Christian charities, and that all this grows out of our close communion. But what are the facts? What do the facts which

I have just noted say in behalf of the Pedobaptists of America in the seventeenth, and, I might have added, the eighteenth century also. Are we not under the painful necessity of not only charging them with bigotry, but, in too many instances, with *intolerance?* Religious intolerance never exists without bigotry, and bigotry never exists without fostering a spirit which would lead to the same unhappy results. Any system of religion, therefore, which in its practical influence would lead us to persecute those who are of a different opinion with ourselves, or would preclude Christian fellowship with those who are right in the fundamentals of religion, and have passed from death unto life, and become the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ, just because they differ from us in some things not absolutely necessary to salvation, must be wrong, radically wrong. Such is the connection between cause and effect, that we may always look for the latter to follow the former so far as the cause is permitted to operate unobstructed by different circumstances.

If restricted communion have a tendency to make us bigoted and uncharitable toward Christians who differ from us in opinion, then we might look for religious intolerance and persecution in some form, either in spirit or practice, to mark the history of the Baptist denomination. But you may trace the history of the denomination from the days of John the Baptist to the present time, and you will find that all the blood that has ever been shed on account of Baptists, has been shed by the cruelty of their persecutors, and flowed from the veins of Baptists themselves. Whatever imperfections hav•

marked their history—whatever zeal untempered by knowledge, or whatever enthusiasm may have seized their ranks, at any period, they cannot be charged by their most virulent enemies with ever having been a persecuting people.*

It is true, great moral *tenacity* has marked their history; which, while it has also marked their *integrity*, has nevertheless brought down upon them severe, and, at times, unmitigated persecutions from other Christian denominations. But this *tenacity* by which they have been distinguished, and for which they have suffered so much calumny and violent persecution, has been *for the Bible*—the pure and unaltered Word of God in all it communicates for the faith and practice of mankind; and that, too, irrespective of popular opinions and influence. They contend for that liberty which allows every man to read, think, and decide for himself as to the duties and privileges set forth in God's revelation to the world. They contend that

* A gentleman put into my hand, a few days ago, an *extract* which he made a short time since, when in Providence, R. I., from the City Directory. It will be remembered that this is the place in which Roger Williams took refuge when banished by the Pedobaptists from Massachusetts, in 1636, for his principles of religious liberty which were regarded as Baptistical. It goes to substantiate the fact that Baptists have not been persecutors, when they in their turn have had it in their power to banish those who differed from them in their religious views. We give to the reader the extract, and let it speak for itself.—"1658. The town, though strongly urged by the Commissioners of the United Colonies, steadfastly refused to banish such Quakers as were here, or to prohibit others from coming, and consequently became a City of Refuge to that persecuted people." The reader will observe that this was twenty-two years after the banishment of Roger Williams from Massachusetts.

we should both do and teach the commandments of Christ as Christ himself hath said, and not as man says. They contend that the duties and ordinances of the gospel are to be observed as Christ, the great Head of the Church has directed, and not as the Councils of the Church may decree. In short, they contend that conscience is no safe guide in any of these things, only as it is enlightened by the word and Spirit of God. And all they ask of the whole Pedobaptist world, is for them to follow their example in this particular—be willing to take God's Holy Word as it may be literally interpreted, and as the best authorities do construe its sacred words, and they are certain that it would not be long before the whole evangelical church would say, we have "one Lord, one faith, one Baptism."

One other thing which is worthy of praise must be allowed us, and that is CONSISTENCY. We neither believe in, nor will we give countenance to, infant sprinkling; nor allow sprinkling or pouring to be Christian baptism; nor will we admit that any unbaptized person has a right to commune. Here we stand unflinchingly, and are determined not to move or swerve a hair's breadth. If we should, we would be inconsistent. I *might* say, if we should depart from any of these land-marks we would cease to be Baptists.

If the same consistency marked the Pedobaptists with regard to the ordinances of Christ, there would be hope of ultimately ending this controversy. It is a fact which all our Pedobaptist ministers and many of the people know, that in their churches there are multitudes who, but for certain manœuverings on their part, would have been Baptists. And

even now a very little thing would so far wake up this subject in their minds, as to make them feel very uncomfortable in their connection with Pedobaptist churches.*

Let the Pedobaptist churches enforce their respective disciplines, and require their members to invariably sanction infant baptism, and there would be such a fire kindled among them that nothing but immersion would quench it. They would drive their members off to Baptist churches by hundreds if not by thousands. They dare not do this thing; but I ask, are they consistent for not doing it?

Again, I know of many ministers of the gospel who, notwithstanding the avowed principles of the Pedobaptist churches, that baptism is an essential prerequisite to the communion, will immerse such as have been sprinkled in infancy, and even adult years, rather than let them go to the Baptists. Is not this inconsistent? It is certainly inconsistent with established usage, not to say the plain letter and example of the New Testament; and it is virtually denying the validity of sprinkling as a Gospel ordinance. Such, therefore, lay themselves open to the charge of that kind of inconsistency, which shows a want of moral honesty. In their disciplines they say one thing, and in their practice they do another, by which they contradict their own professions, and set aside their declared belief to the world. This certainly is the most charitable view that we can take of the matter, unless they contend that it is proper to *re-baptize*, or in other words to

* See "A Pedobaptist Church no Home for a Baptist." Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society.

baptize the same person twice. But they do not thus contend. They universally hold, that baptism is an ordinance which is to be administered to the same person but once. Yet some of them, to my own knowledge, do re-baptize; and that, too, with impunity, as far as it relates to any censure that may come upon them from the church to which they belong. They say, "WE believe that sprinkling, pouring, or immersion, is either of them valid Christian baptism, whether administered to infants or adult believers." But the young convert comes forward and says, "I am not satisfied with my infant sprinkling; I want you to immerse me." "Well," says the minister, "as baptism is to answer a good conscience you shall be accommodated." But, I ask, what does the minister do with *his* conscience in baptizing the same person twice? Again, the more matured Christian comes forward and says, "I was sprinkled when I was converted; but I have examined the subject more minutely since, and am not satisfied. I think the Bible teaches immersion as essential to the right administration of this ordinance, and I feel it my duty to be thus baptized. If you cannot consistently do it, I shall go to the Baptists. I do not desire you to violate your own rules on my account; but still I should like to remain in the church of my early choice, if I can follow Christ in his ordinance." "Oh," says the preacher, "my brother, you need give yourself no uneasiness about the matter. You shall be accommodated. Your own conscience shall be fully satisfied. I will baptize you again." I acknowledge that this is not in accordance with established usage in Pedobaptist churches; but

this usage is departed from in individual cases. I know several ministers of the gospel, one of whom was in 1847 a Presiding Elder of a District in the New England Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, who will do this thing;—aye, he will go further than this. He told me, that "under some circumstances he would be willing to commune with an unbaptized person." This, however, is not Methodism. Yet is this man, with his declared views, allowed to be a minister, and even hold the high and responsible office of a Presiding Elder of a District in the M. E. Church.

It has been questioned whether the Methodist Episcopal Church really requires baptism as a prerequisite to the communion, or church membership. The practice of some of her ministers seems to indicate that she does not. When a Presiding Elder of a District avows that he would not object to immerse such as had been sprinkled, if they were dissatisfied with their baptism, and that he would be willing to commune with unbaptized persons, will be very proper to inquire if, in this particular, he is a sound Methodist. I do not hesitate to aver that he is not, nor any one else who shall advocate the same views. To determine what are the doctrines or discipline of any Church, we must not rely upon the mere statements or practice of isolated individuals. They may not be orthodox themselves; and therefore it would be unsafe to depend upon them for an exposition of the peculiar features of the denomination to which they belong. To ascertain what the Methodist Episcopal Church really believes, or requires her ministers and members to believe and practise, we must go to her

Discipline and standard writers. To these therefore we will now go, for the purpose of determining this question, viz.: *What do they teach as to Baptism being a pre-requisite to the Lord's Supper, and Church membership?*

We begin with their Discipline, the last edition, published by order of the General Conference of the M. E Church, 1850. On page 24, section 2, it is asked—"How shall we prevent improper persons from insinuating themselves into the Church?"—"*Answer.* Let none be received into the Church until they are recommended by a leader with whom they have met at least six months on trial, and have been *baptized.*" I admit that probationers for "full membership" in the M. E. Church, may be admitted to the Table of the Lord with them, providing they have been baptized, and not without. To this agrees their general invitation on communion occasions, as on page 106. It is as follows: "Ye that do truly and earnestly repent of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbors, and intend to lead a new life, *following the commandments of God, and walking from hence forth in his holy ways;* draw near with faith and take this holy sacrament to your comfort." Bishop Hedding, in a discourse on the administration of discipline, which he delivered before the New York, Providence, New England, and Maine Conferences, and published at their request, states that there are several things which should debar a minister from giving a general invitation in the congregation to members in good standing in other churches, "to come to the Table of the Lord." Such as, "*heretical doctrines, immoral practices,*" *any practice*

which would exclude a member from their communion, or non membership in any church. We give his own words, (pages 72, 73,) and the reader can then judge for himself. "Is it proper," he asks, "for a preacher to give out a general invitation in the congregation to members in good standing in other churches, to come to the Lord's Supper?" To this, the bishop gives the following answer: "No; for the most unworthy persons are apt to think themselves in good standing, and sometimes persons who are not members of any church, will take the liberty, from an invitation, to come. And again, there are some communities, called churches, which, from heretical doctrines or immoral practices, have no claim to the privileges of Christians, and ought not to be admitted to the communion of any Christian people." The rule, he adds, in that case, is as follows: "Let no person who is not a member of our church be admitted to the communion without examination, and some token given, by an elder or deacon. No person shall be admitted to the Lord's Supper among us who is guilty of any practice for which we would exclude a member of our Church." *Discipline,* page 104. Now I ask, how much further than the above, as to guarding the Lord's Table, would Baptists desire to go?

The reader's special attention is invited to one very important *item* in this quotation, to show that in the opinion of the Bishop, non-membership in any church, disqualifies a person from the privilege of partaking of the Lord's Supper, in the Methodist Episcopal Church. The preacher is advised not to give a general invitation in the congregation, be

cause, says the Bishop, "*sometimes persons who are not members of any Church, will take the liberty, from an invitation, to come.*"

In these authorities we clearly perceive, 1. That no person can be admitted into the Methodist Episcopal Church until he is baptized. 2. That no one can be admitted to the communion with them, who is not either a baptized member on probation, or in full membership in their church, or a baptized believer belonging to, and in good standing with some other church. 3. The conclusion is that the Methodist Episcopal Church hold, that Baptism is a pre-requisite to the Lord's Supper, and the door of admission into the church.

The quotation of one more authority will confirm the above; and it is good authority. The book from which I am about to quote, is recognized by the General Conference of the M. E. Church as a standard work, suitable as a text book for young men, in their preparatory studies for the ministry in their church; and for the "third year," in their "course of study." See "*Discipline*," page 217, under the head "*Systematic Divinity.*" The work referred to, is "Hibbard on Baptism." I quote from the edition of 1841, page 174. It reads as follows: "It is but just to remark that in one principle, the Baptist and Pedobaptist Churches agree. They both agree in rejecting from communion at the Table of the Lord, and in denying the rights of church fellowship to all who have not been baptized. Valid baptism they consider as essential to constitute visible church membership. *This also we hold.* The only question, then, that here divides us is, what is essential to valid baptism"

I sincerely thank brother Hibbard, my old friend, for the above honest statement, for the concession which he has so frankly made, and for the justice which he has done to Baptist principles. On the communion question, brother Hibbard is in *principle* a Baptist, and if he should ever happen to discover that the Greek word *baptize*, means immerse, I think that about the only prop that holds him to Pedobaptist views would fall. And, notwithstanding he has written a very elaborate and able work to defend Pedobaptists, yet I have no doubt that the candor and integrity of this excellent brother, would lead him to follow the example of some of his brethren who have felt it their duty to be "buried with Christ by baptism."

To show that this view of the subject is, and ever has been essentially Methodistic, the reader shall be furnished with extracts from the writings of the founders and fathers of Methodism. We will begin with Rev. John Wesley, their founder. In his notes on Acts v. 2, he says: "Here is a native specimen of a New Testament Church, which is, a company of men, called by the Gospel, grafted into Christ by baptism." Rev. Joseph Benson, who, by the appointment of the English Conference, wrote a commentary, in which he was to embody and expand the notes of Mr. Wesley, in his commentary on the same passage, endorses Mr. W's notes. He observes, "As the word church (*ekklesia*) now occurs a second time in this history, it may be proper to observe, that we have here a native specimen of a New Testament Church; which is a company of persons called by the Gospel, grafted into Christ by faith and the Holy Spirit,

admitted into the society of Christians by baptism." Dr. Adam Clarke, on the same passage, quotes Mr. Wesley's words *verbatim*, viz., that a New Testament Church must be "1. Called by the Gospel. 2. Grafted into Christ by baptism." In his observations on the nature and importance of baptism at the close of Mark xvi. on page 349, the Dr. remarks that "according to its nature, it is introductory to the visible church." And again, "Baptism also brings its *privileges* along with it; while it opens the way to a partaking of holy things in the church, and places the baptized within the church, over which God exercises a more singular providence than over those who are out of the church."

One quotation more may suffice. This is from high authority—Rev. Richard Watson, who is the theological oracle of the Methodists, both in England and in this country. In his Theological Institutes, volume iii. in the chapter headed "The Christian Church," Mr. W. says, "The Church of Christ, in its largest sense, consists of all who have been baptized in the name of Christ, and who thereby make a visible profession of faith in his Divine mission." Again, on the same page, Mr. W. asserts: "It is obligatory on all who are convinced of the truth of Christianity to be baptized; and upon all thus baptized, frequently to partake of the Lord's Supper." On page 371, the same author observes, "Thus was baptism expressly made the initiatory rite, by which believers of "all nations" were to be introduced into the church and covenant of grace." With the above authorities before him, what *sound* Methodist can ever invite to the Lord's

Table, or commune with an unbaptized person And how can he censure Baptists for adhering to a principle which he himself allows? Let all our Pedobaptist brethren commune with us *in baptism*, and we will commune with them *in the Lord's Supper*. For the former, according to their own concessions, must precede the latter.

Does any one think we demand too much of our brethren in order to union? But of whom do we ask this? Only of those who admit that the immersion of believers is valid baptism, (and very few dispute this,) and who profess a desire to have every barrier to union at the Lord's Table removed. It is not in our power to remove this barrier, for we did not raise it. We have not changed the ordinances. On the contrary, is it not clear as the sun, that we adhere to the plain letter of the law of Christ, against our own ease, interest, and popularity? We ask of them no sacrifices which we do not cheerfully make ourselves. Only as "the answer of a good conscience toward God," do we hold our present position. All that we ask of our brethren is, that in brotherly love they will respect our consciences in this matter, *so far as what we ask does not interfere with their own*. If we understand the case aright, they could all be immersed without any violation of conscience. By so doing, they remove the only barrier to our church communion, and having "one Lord, one faith, and one baptism," we shall joyfully come together "in the unity of the Spirit, and in the bond of peace."

CHAPTER IV.

THE COMPARISON CONTINUED.

ANOTHER fact which illustrates the inconsistency of nearly all the Pedobaptist churches is, that their open communion professions conflict with their own Discipline, public journals, and ecclesiastical decisions. By an examination of their Disciplines, it will be found that they are but little, if any, more open communion than Baptists.

Let us glance at a few facts. Dr. Howell justly observes—"In reference to the several Protestant denominations, I believe they all hold that manifest corruption in doctrine and worship is a disqualification for the reception of the Lord's Supper. Let that fact be remembered, and then how shall we answer the following interrogatories? Do not Methodists habitually and bitterly charge both these upon the Presbyterians, on the score of their Calvinism? Are the Presbyterians less ready or adroit in hurling back upon the Methodists the same imputations on the score of their Arminianism? Each, too, has its own internal war. Old School, New School, Cumberland, Hopkinsian, and other Presbyterians; and Episcopal, Protestant, Whitfield, and other Methodists, strive on the arena of ecclesiastical combat. Do they all commune? If they do, is it a feast of

union, and the love of each other, for the truth's sake, which each denies is held by the other. If so, what means this clangor of arms, this shaking of shields, and the noise of their fierce combats which I hear? If they unite in love at the Lord's Table, why do they denounce each other in derision immediately after in the conference, the session, and the pulpit?"

These remarks of Dr. H. may seem to some severe, yet are they just. Dr. Engles, the editor of a leading journal of the PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, under date of Sept. 12, 1840, observed—"It is presumed that a Presbyterian believes in Presbyterian doctrine, or why is he a Presbyterian? And that a Methodist believes in the doctrine of his own church, or why is he not something else? The Methodists and Presbyterians alike believe that they have very good reasons for being as they are; nay, so potent are those reasons regarded, that neither imagines he could ever be induced to change his position. * * * * Let us ask them if they are prepared to advise their people, on all favorable occasions, to go and commune with Presbyterians? * * * Why, then, should they be angry with us for following their example? Holding the faith we do, * * can we, or ought we to say to the sheep of our folds—Yonder are pastures in which we believe there are poisonous weeds growing, but still there can be little danger in feeding occasionally there? In this matter we have never found our Methodist brethren a particle more liberal than ourselves."

Thus we see that there is not much of the spirit of communion between Presbyterians and Metho-

dists. The same writer gives us to understand, that the hostile attitudes of Old School and New School Presbyterians to each other, is a sufficient barrier to communion together. "The measure," says Dr. Engles, "by which the New School were excluded from the communion of the Presbyterian Church, was either righteous or unrighteous; if the former, why should we make any professions of attachment which our actions do not sustain; or, if the latter, why do we not magnanimously avow it, and invite them back in a body? We believe it was righteous; and whether right or wrong in our belief, we contend that while the causes exist which led to it, *it is utterly inexpedient to hold communion with those churches.*"

Who does not see from these extracts that our Pedobaptist brethren who view the subject of open communion in all its bearings, are obliged to decide in favor of close communion. The following views of a distinguished Pedobaptist writer, I believe, will express the feelings of nine-tenths of all the members of the different evangelical churches, if they were to speak out on this question: "For the last twenty years or more," says the writer referred to, "I do not recollect of having entertained a doubt, that the opening of the doors of communion to all of what are denominated evangelical churches, is erroneous; that it will either be changed, or lead to errors of a still more serious nature, containing in itself *essentially* an indifference to sound religious principle and practice, though slow in its development. * * * * I object to the practice, in the first place, because *I have never yet seen the man, how-*

ever strenuously he might advocate it, who could inform me *how far it was right, and duty called to extend the privilege*—a very important item in making out a line of conduct, and without which it must be unsafe in matters of conscience to act at all. We are told, it is true, that all who are evangelical, or who hold the essentials of religion, are to be admitted to the Lord's Table; but then these essentials are undefined; some make them but two or three at most, others, perhaps, four or five, and others still more. * * *

"I object to the practice, in the second place, because it clearly implies that our church creeds or confessions contain certain items of faith and practice, *the belief of which, or conformity to which, is not necessary to the right of church privilege.* This implies either that these things are not based on divine authority, on which supposition they are the works of men; they are schismatical too, dividing the church where there is no conscientious principle involved, and, therefore, ought to be rejected as evils; or it implies that, notwithstanding they are based on divine authority, they are indifferent—of little importance, may be practised or not, as we may see proper, with impunity;—which last conclusion is to me revolting. * * * * I suppose a case which I think is in point. An individual applies to you for admission to baptism and the Lord's Supper. After examining him to full satisfaction as to his experimental religion, you inquire of him whether he will conform to the order of God's house, in submitting to discipline, the discharge of religious duty, such as family discipline, the baptism of his children,

&c. But he replies, I do not approve of this government, and as to the baptism of children, I consider it unauthorized. You would reply, I presume, that you make subjection to this duty a condition of membership, and of privileges connected with it. But on the supposition you practise open communion, he would reply; You admit to all the privilege I desire without such subjection, for you admit *Baptists*, and those who neither believe nor practise it. You reply—because they submit to their own order. He takes his departure, connects himself with those who will not require this thing, and returns, and, at your invitation, enjoys with you all he asked. I see in such a case a predicament I should not envy. For what is your attitude now in the eyes of your own members? Most assuredly you appear inconsistent, and they must feel in consequence that they lie under a condition, a compliance with which guaranties them no privilege. You lay every distinguishing feature of your own church liable to prejudice and reproach. To me the inference would be, your conduct being right, that your church ought forthwith to relinquish its own distinctiveness, and sink into the church catholic, and every other church practising the same ought to do likewise.

"I am fully aware that my views on this subject are esteemed very *illiberal*. This is the *argumentum ad invidiam*, which with many weighs heavier than a thousand others. I have, however, always been happy to consider them *liberal to truth and sincere in the truth*. But the state of the case is misapprehended; the principle, on the ground of consistency and sincerity in the truth, applies

equally to all sects, who must, in charity, be supposed conscientiously attached to their own peculiarities, for where this is the case, they must needs do violence to their own consciences where they dispense with such peculiarities. And I would here add, that the practice is absolutely inconsistent, in my opinion, with the very idea of *fellowship*, which in all cases implies a community of responsibility."

In addition to the above, I will call the attention of the reader to an extract from the records of a Presbyterian Synod, as published by its order in the Union Evangelist and Presbyterian Advocate, 1820, vol. ii., pp. 96—99. To the question—"Is it proper that there should be intercommunion between Presbyterians and those denominations who hold Arminian sentiments?" the following answer is given in this report:—"That after giving it all the attention which the importance of the subject demands, they are of the opinion, that for Presbyterians to hold communion in sealing ordinances with those who deny the doctrines of grace, through the blood of Christ, &c., is highly prejudicial to the truth as it is in Jesus. Nor can such intercommunion answer any valuable purpose to those who practise it, as two cannot walk together except they be agreed." Every one perceives that this report is directed against Methodists, and all who hold Arminian sentiments.

Another report of a committee on a former resolution of a Presbyterian Synod, and which was adopted, goes even further than this. It is as follows:—

"The committee are of opinion, that for Pres-

byterians to hold communion in sealing ordinances with those who belong to churches holding doctrines contrary to our standards, is incompatible with the purity and peace of the church, and highly prejudicial to the truth as it is in Jesus. Nor can such communions answer any valuable purpose, &c. In accordance with these views your committee are of opinion, that *the practice of inviting to the communion all who are of good standing in their own churches, is calculated to do much evil*, and should not be continued; while every church session is, however, left at liberty to admit to occasional communion members of other denominations, after having conversed with them, and received satisfaction of their soundness in the faith and Christian practice."

The committee, though full in its report in favor of close communion, yet seems rather to draw back a little by leaving every church session at liberty to admit to "*occasional* communion members of other denominations," that is, on the condition that they give "satisfaction of their soundness in the faith and Christian practice;" in other words, if they are Presbyterians in doctrine and in practice; for nothing short of this could give the required "satisfaction."

The General Assembly of 1839 fully sustains these synodical doctrines. The language of the Assembly is:—"Every Christian church, or association of churches, is entitled to declare the *terms* of admission into the communion. And what is the unanimous doctrine of their leading divines as to these terms? Ans. "*Agreement in essentials.*"

What are the "essentials?" Answer. The reports which I have just quoted inform us.

This is going quite beyond Baptists. They do not feel at liberty to exclude any true believer in Jesus from the Lord's Table, whose life is answerable to his profession, and who by precept and example sanctions immersion as the only Christian baptism. In short, they refuse not to commune with any exemplary Christian whom they believe to have been inducted into the church of God in Christ's own appointed way. But Pedobaptists will not go thus far. There are a multitude of *members whom they have introduced into the Church of God*, and recognized as members of his mystical body, and *yet they never permit them to commune with them*. I mean their baptized children, concerning whom they say in their Confession of Faith, p. 273:—"A particular church consists of a number of professing Christians, *with their offspring*, voluntarily associated together for Divine worship and godly living." Again, p. 327: "Children born within the pale of the visible church, and dedicated to God in baptism, are under the inspection and government of the church. And *when they come to years of discretion*, if they be free from scandal, sober and steady, and have sufficient knowledge to discern the Lord's body, they ought to be informed that it is their duty and privilege to come to the Lord's Table."

In the Larger Catechism we find the following: Quest. 62. "What is the visible church?" Ans. "The visible church is a society made up of all such as, in all ages and places of the world, do profess the true religion, *and their children*."

Porter, on Christian Baptism, says: *Baptized children are members of the visible church.*"

Dr. Miller, whose views on this subject harmonize with those of the Methodists, inquires: "Is there no advantage in publicly ratifying the *connection of our children*, as well as ourselves, *with the visible church?*" Dr. M also avers, that "there are but two places in the universe where there are no children; one is the bottomless pit, and the other is the Baptist church." But in this declaration the doctor was mistaken. There is one more place where there are no children, and that is, the Pedobaptist communion table.

This is what I call, not "close," but *partial* communion. Baptists, close communion as they are, never refuse to commune with their own members who retain the moral standing they have at the time of baptism; but Pedobaptists shut out from the communion *one-half* or two-thirds of their members, who stand as fair as they *did* when baptized.

The peculiar views and discipline of the PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH render it close communion. They who contend for apostolic succession as essential to the gospel ministry, will not recognize men who are out of that line as ministers of the gospel, and therefore duly qualified to administer the ordinances of the church. With these views, which the whole Protestant Episcopal Church entertain, no intelligent member or minister of that communion will any more receive the ordinances from the hands of Presbyterian, Methodist, or Baptist ministers, than they would from the hands of laymen But though they may not deem it consistent to come to the Presbyterian or Methodist com-

munion table, yet they will condescend to allow them to come to theirs, after the elements have been consecrated by the hands of one of the regular descendants in the line from St. Peter. And yet by this great *condescension* they exhibit their *inconsistency*, by departing from their own laws; as will appear by a reference to the Book of Common Prayer under "Confirmation." It reads thus: "And there shall none be admitted to the holy communion, until such times as he be confirmed, or be ready or desirous to be confirmed." Of course they cannot admit, according to this law, any but Roman Catholics, and such as have confirmation like themselves. As for Presbyterians—Old and New School, Congregationalists, Methodists, and Baptists, should they desire such a privilege, they must all stand aside; because none of these denominations either desire, practise, or believe in Confirmation. With close communion laws, I ask, how can the Protestant Episcopal Church be open communion? They cannot claim to be open communionists *with these laws*, and with their refusal to reciprocate the courtesy of other denominations by sitting down with them at their table, and thereby recognizing them as churches of Christ, and their pastors as his accredited and authorized ministers.

The METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, by a fair construction of her Discipline, is far from being open communion.* By open communion, I under-

* This is the Discipline of 1847. Since then, the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church has somewhat revised this little book. In thus revising it, they have struck out, on page 77, section xxiii. on the Lord's Supper, these

stand a joint participation of the different evangelical denominations in the Lord's Supper. This definition is intended to include, not only the admission of members of other churches of good and regular standing, but a reciprocity of the different churches in the communion one with the other. We have seen, that though the Episcopalians will break their own rules to allow persons who neither practise nor believe in Confirmation to come to the Lord's Table with them, yet they will not reciprocate by receiving the elements from what they deem unconsecrated hands. The Methodist Episcopal Church do not deem it wrong to go and eat and drink with them, though they will never return the courtesy. But I shall show that, whatever Methodists may do with regard to the act of sitting down at their table, according to their Discipline they are far from being open communion with regard to the admission of members of other churches to their own table.

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words: "Let no person that is not a member of our church be admitted to the communion without examination, and some token given by an elder or deacon." With this notice of this fact, the reader will account for the present edition of this little work, not retaining it, as in the former editions. Still with this alteration of the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, she has not gone far enough in reform or revision to merit the name of being an open communion church. Perhaps the next General Conference will strike a blow at the very root of the argument, by which I have endeavored to prove that she is not open communion in her Discipline, if she is in practice. And *then* I shall be free to come out and admit that she is *consistent* as it relates to an agreement of practice and Discipline. One of her ministers remarked to me that their Discipline was open communion in its *spirit*, if it were not in its *letter*. I merely replied that I considered it then a very extraordinary book. Its letter said "no," but its spirit said, "yes." (1852.)

On page 104 of their Book of Discipline, 1850, it is asked: Quest. Are there any directions to be given concerning the Administration of the Lord's Supper? In the second article of the answer, we have the following: "No person shall be admitted to the Lord's Supper among us, who is guilty of any practice for which we would exclude a member of our church."

We will suppose a minister of another church applies to an elder for admission to the Lord's Supper. The elder looks at him, and says: "You are very plain in your dress, and as far as your appearance is concerned I can admit you, but I must examine you as to your practice." He then takes the Book of Discipline and reads on page 86, section i., question 4, "What shall be done with those ministers or preachers who hold and disseminate, publicly or privately, doctrines which are contrary to our articles of religion? Ans. Let the same process be observed as in case of gross immorality." "Now," says the elder, "I would inquire, are you with us in doctrine?" "No, sir, I am not;" replies the applicant. "I believe," continues he, "in the doctrine of personal and eternal predestination and foreordination, as set forth in the Presbyterian Confession of Faith, pp. 15—19; and I accordingly preach it whenever I deem it proper so to do." "Then," says the elder, "I cannot admit you to the table of the Lord, as you must perceive from the Discipline which I have just read." "But, then," responds the applicant, "that applies to *your* ministers and not to us." "I admit that it does," rejoins the elder; "but think you that we ought to admit a person to the table who is

guilty of what would exclude a minister from the church." Besides, the Discipline says in another place, "that no person shall be admitted to the Lord's Supper among us, who is guilty of any practice for which we would exclude a member of our church." "May I not further inquire," says the applicant, "whether this last rule which you have quoted does not apply to members, and not to ministers?" "I think not," replies the elder; "for we have another rule very similar to it which particularly applies to members. Page 92, section iv., article 3. 'If any member of our church shall be clearly convicted of endeavoring to sow dissensions in any of our societies, by inveighing against either our doctrines or Discipline, such person so offending shall be first reproved by the senior minister or preacher of his circuit, and, if he persist in such pernicious practices, he shall be expelled from the church.' Now, if you will promise that you will not inveigh either against our doctrines or Discipline, I can admit you, otherwise, I cannot." "Why, I thought you were open communion; but I find I am mistaken," replies the applicant. "O yes," says the elder, "we are open communion. Our greatest objection to the Baptists is, that they will hang on to close communion." "Well, upon my word," says the applicant, "all the difference I can perceive between you and the Baptists is, you profess *open* communion, and are in your Discipline *close* communion; while the Baptists make their practice agree with their profession. From what I can learn from you and your Discipline, I find that the terms of communion with you are simply these—*we must believe, preach, and dress just like the Methodists*

If I mistake not, that is going a little ahead of the Baptists. For Baptists will allow their members and ministers to differ on some theological points, and yet not refuse to fellowship them at the Lord's Table. Permit me, then, my dear friend, to suggest, that instead of crying out against the Baptists for their close communion, boasting at the same time of your open communion, you lay your hand upon your mouth, until you alter your Discipline, striking out the restrictions which render your church more restricted in her communion, than even that church which we Pedobaptists all agree to censure for its practical want of catholicity."

Finally, it can be shown from the Discipline of the M. E. Church, that it is as strictly close communion as any Baptist church in the land. Page 74, section ii., question 4, it is asked—"What shall we do with those members of our church who wilfully and repeatedly neglect to meet their class? Ans. 1. Let the elder, deacon, or one of the preachers, visit them, whenever it is practicable, and explain to them the consequence if they continue to neglect, viz., exclusion. 2. If they do not amend, let him who has the charge of the circuit or station bring their case before the society, or a select number, before whom they shall have been cited to appear; and if they be found guilty of wilful neglect by the decision of a majority of the members, before whom their case is brought, let them be laid aside, and let the preacher show that they are excluded for a breach of our rules, and not for immoral conduct."

From the above laws of the M. E. Church, we observe that *non-attendance upon class*, without

any immorality, is sufficient to exclude a person from the church. Now suppose this excluded person, who may be in every other sense a worthy member, should join another evangelical church—nothing against his moral character—no one doubts his piety—not even the Methodists doubt his sincerity, and that he is a man of genuine religion. All that can be said of him is, "He will not attend class." Well, now, he comes back to the church from which he has been excluded, and presents himself as a member of another church, in good and regular standing, for admittance to the Lord's Table. Says the elder, "My friend, I cannot admit you." "Why not?" asks the brother; "do you not believe that I am a Christian, and that I am bound with you, as such, to a better land? And do you not rejoice with me in the hope of sitting down together at the marriage supper of the Lamb?" "O yes, my brother," responds the elder, "I must inquire (perhaps I am a little too fast,) are you truly sorry that you did not comply with the rules of the church, and attend class?" "I am not sorry, my brother," he responds, "for I did not then, neither do I now, believe in class meetings." "Well, then, I must read you the law," replies the elder. Page 96, section iv., article 5—'After such forms of trial and expulsion, such persons shall have no privilege of society or of sacraments in our church, without contrition, confession, and proper trial.' Now, if you are not penitent, as I perceive you are not, you see that you cannot be admitted to the Lord's Table with us." He answers, "I have only to say, my dear brother, as I have not violated any of the laws of Jesus Christ, I did not

know but you might deem it proper to allow me to sit down occasionally with my old brethren at the Lord's Table." "It is true," replies the elder, "I do not charge you with any direct violation of the laws of Christ, but you have broken or refused to yield obedience to the laws of our church, and that is sufficient to shut you away from the table." "Why, elder, the Baptists would not do that thing. They shut the door, they say, because we will not obey Christ. And there seems to be some good reason in that; but you admit that I am not excluded for disobedience to Christ, but to your church. Has your church a power to make laws, and bind them upon its members, that Christ never made, and then for non-obedience to exclude a genuine Christian, and treat him as a heathen and a publican? If so, I regret not that I am out of the pale of her communion."

In conclusion, let us inquire whether, by fair inference, this rule appertaining to *class meetings*, which would exclude all the members of the M. E. Church who wilfully refuse to attend them, and cut off all such from the Lord's Table in that church, would not also preclude members of other churches who do not attend class meetings from communing with the Methodists? I think it would. We have seen already that those excluded for the neglect of this duty are cut off from that privilege, though they may be genuine Christians, and in good standing in other churches. And the rule which says—"No person shall be admitted to the Lord's Supper among us, who is guilty of any practice for which we would exclude a member of our church," would shut out from communion among the Methodists

all members of other churches, who do not practise attending class meetings. Now I would ask what are the facts in this case? In the first place, class meetings are a peculiarity of Methodism. There may be a few churches that have them to some limited extent; but the great mass of the evangelical churches neither have them, nor practise attending them. Their "practice" essentially varies from that of the M. E. Church, and is such as would exclude them from the M. E. Church if they belonged to it. Can the Methodists, then, admit them to the Lord's Supper? Their *rule* says, that they shall not be admitted. If they do admit them they break their own rules; and this they ought not to do, for every traveling preacher is required to pledge "not to mend their rules, but to keep them; not for wrath but conscience' sake." See p 46, art. 10.

CHAPTER V.

PRINCIPLE THE GROUND OF ACTION.

I HAVE been thus particular in the examination of this subject, to show the ground upon which Baptists act in the admission of persons to the Lord's Supper—that it is not prejudice nor bigotry that influences them to adopt their course, but *principle*—that it is not that they believe themselves any better than other Christians who differ from them in opinion, but because they desire to do the will of God, as they understand it to be revealed in the gospel of his Son Jesus Christ. It is not, in short, because they do not believe that there are multitudes of Pedobaptists who, but for educational influence, would have received the ordinances as Baptists understand and practise them; but they dare not either practise error or sanction it by extending *church* fellowship to such as, in their opinion, have been irregularly introduced into the visible church of Christ. For this course, consistent as it must be admitted to be, they are most unjustly censured as being exceedingly uncharitable towards other Christian denominations. But the censure is powerless, and will remain so until it can be shown that the Baptists have been, or are now, unsocial and intolerant towards those Christians who walk

not with them Baptists will go with other denominations just as far as they can without compromising the truth. This they cannot, will not do. They will exchange pulpits—mingle in the social and prayer circle; they will rejoice in the prosperity of the cause of Christ in Pedobaptist churches; but when you ask them to sanction sprinkling or pouring for Christian baptism, every true Baptist will be found at his post, and from it he will not move, whatever the consequences may be. He would consider himself a traitor to God and man to forsake his post of duty. The truth he will stand up to, whatever it may cost him; nor will he sell it, if for it he could obtain the smiles of the whole Pedobaptist world.

In these sheets I have endeavored to show that open communionists, as some would call them, have not been more distinguished for respect to the rights of conscience, and a brotherly feeling towards all Christians, than the poor reviled Baptists. That many of them have been the persecutors, and the Baptists the persecuted. That whatever Baptists have been, they have never been persecutors. They will suffer any thing for the truth, but they will not *coerce* any man's conscience. If neither arguments nor gospel means will bring him over to their views, they leave him to God and his own conscience, with their prayers for his spiritual and eternal welfare.

Let me say to all whom it may concern in general, and to my old friends of the M. E. Church in particular, do not censure us for being close communion in our practice, while you are decidedly so in theory. I have shown that the laws of the Epis-

copal and M. E. Church, and others, are close communion in their character. The former can only admit to the Lord's Supper those that are confirmed or desire so to be; and the latter can admit from other churches none but those who "practise" attendance upon class meetings. If we cannot believe alike on all points, let us be careful how we impugn each other's principles. If we cannot all have "one baptism," let us all seek to have "one Lord, one faith, and one Spirit, even as we are called in one hope of our calling."

In summing up what I have said in this treatise, I will give for the reflection of the reader a brief synopsis of the arguments advanced.

I. It is doubtful whether the phrase, "close communion," ought to be applied to Baptists at all. They go as far as *they* believe the laws of Jesus Christ authorize them to go. They restrict their invitations to all such as sanction these laws; with them and none others can they hold sacramental communion.

II. Baptists most cheerfully extend the hand of Christian and ministerial fellowship to any Christian or Christian minister, though he be a Pedobaptist or even a Quaker. They do not consider this spiritual fellowship inconsistent with restricted communion, which they regard essential only to *church fellowship*.

III. The Baptists and Pedobaptists *agree* that Baptism is a preliminary to the Lord's Supper. The example of Christ, his commission to his ministers, and the practice of the apostles teach it. We also have the testimony of the apostolic fathers,

and best and most orthodox divines down to the present day to the same effect.

IV. They *differ* in their views of what constitutes Christian Baptism, which they agree is the preliminary to the Lord's Supper; and they also differ as to who are the proper subjects of baptism.

The Baptists say, none but immersed believers are the proper subjects of this ordinance. To prove the truth of their position, they have the example of Christ, who was immersed in the river Jordan—that of the Ethiopian Eunuch, whom Philip immersed—the teachings of Paul, who calls it a burial, &c., &c.; and nothing in the New Testament indicates any other mode for baptism, as either taught or practised by Christ or the apostolic churches. They cannot, therefore, admit sprinkling or pouring to be valid Christian baptism.

V. Baptists and Pedobaptists act upon the same principle in admitting persons to the Lord's Table. Let both answer this question—"Who are the proper subjects of sacramental communion?" They both answer—"None but baptized believers." Here, then, we agree in principle. And the only reason why our practice disagrees, is because we do not see alike as to what constitutes Christian baptism. Properly the argument, as every sensible man will see, turns not upon close communion, but baptism. If the Baptists are right with regard to their views of baptism, they are certainly right as to their practice of restricted communion.

Some may not fully understand the ground upon which Baptists act; but it is the duty of all Christians to inform themselves upon this matter, and to be able to decide as the unerring pages of divine

truth direct; and as for those who are not candid in their censures upon us, for practising what we conscientiously believe to be right, we pity them, and pray that they may come to a better mind. It is not the design of Baptists to rob God's dear children of their privilege; and I have endeavored to show, that as much as the privilege of open communion is talked of, but few avail themselves of it. If it be a great privilege for all Christians to enjoy jointly sacramental communion, the door is open. Let us have "one baptism," and the difficulty is removed.

VI. The practice of close communion does not lead to bigotry; if it did, we might reasonably suppose, the Baptists would have been persecutors, at some period of their history; for bigotry leads to persecution. Baptists have never been persecutors; but they cannot say this of Pedobaptists. History with trumpet-tongue proclaims the cruelties which Baptists have suffered from the hands of Pedobaptists, even in our own favored country. Why is it that at this day, when, though they are among the largest and most efficient of the evangelical churches of our land, all the Pedobaptist churches seem to count it a virtue to unite in the cry of bigotry, bigotry, bigotry? Are they afraid of us, that we shall at some time get so much power as to do as the Roman Catholics of the old countries, or the Puritans of the new have done? They have nothing to fear; and they must be aware that Baptists cease to be Baptists when they commence a persecuting career.

It is a source of great regret, that churches will permit with impunity their ministers to be schismatical, by winking at what they allow to be *re-*

baptism, when they profess to believe with us that baptism is not to be repeated on the same person—that instead of censuring the men who thus depart from orthodoxy, they virtually approve the act, by giving them the highest stations, or the most honorable posts in their church; and thus, for the sake of preventing people from becoming Baptists, make themselves supremely inconsistent, by practically denying what they declare to the world they believe. Upon the whole I know of no one point upon which the different Pedobaptist churches agree so well, as that of their united opposition to the Baptists.

VII. After all that Pedobaptists say against us for our close communion, they themselves are not open communion. The Presbyterians avow it. The Episcopalians ought to avow the same. With their notions of apostolical succession—that there is no church without a prelate—no ministry without Episcopal ordination—of course they cannot commune with any but Roman Catholics. And as they have decreed that Confirmation is a preliminary to the Lord's Supper, they cannot admit to the Lord's Table members of the different churches, who do not believe in and practise Confirmation. Hence, they cannot participate with these churches, neither jointly nor disjointly. Is not this close communion?

The Methodist Episcopal Church is close communion. None can be admitted to the Lord's Table among them without the approval of an elder or deacon, and none can obtain this without an examination as to doctrine and plainness of dress. If they do not believe as Methodists, they must promise not to disseminate their peculiar views; for

if they inveigh against the doctrine or Discipline of the M. E. Church, not even ministers of other churches can be admitted. Or if they wear rings, ruffles, or superfluities, they must strip themselves from these things or they cannot be admitted to the Lord's Table in the M. E. Church, no matter how good their standing may be in other churches. Or if they have been excluded from the M. E. Church for non-attendance upon class meetings, and have connected themselves with another church, and are in good and regular standing in that church, they cannot be admitted to the Lord's Table in the M. E. Church; neither can they be admitted from another church, if they wilfully absent themselves from class meetings, though there are no class meetings in the church to which they belong. For the laws of the M. E. Church would expel such from their communion, and their Discipline reads—"No person shall be admitted to the Lord's Supper among us, who is guilty of any practice, for which we would exclude a member of our church." Hence, the Discipline of the M. E. Church is clearly close communion, their practice and professions to the contrary notwithstanding.

VIII. Baptists are consistent with their own declared principles, which is more than can be said of some of our Pedobaptist churches. It is not consistent for any denomination to break its own laws. If their laws are bad, they should alter and amend them; if their practice is wrong by which they break their own laws, they should change it; but they should always let their avowed principles and practice work together. But do our Episcopalian brethren, when they practise open commu-

nion, do thus? I ask, do our Methodist Episcopal brethren do thus, by admitting members of other churches indiscriminately to the Lord's Table? We know their Discipline forbids it; but is it not true that they trample upon the authority of their own Discipline, in order to practise open communion in contradistinction to Baptists? Whether the charge of bigotry can be made to lie against the Baptists or not, one thing is certain, that the charge of *manifest inconsistency* must lie against those denominations whose rules are close communion, and whose professions and practice are open communion.

IX. Whatever I have said in reference to other denominations in this treatise, I can assure them, has not been said with any unkind feeling toward them. The freedom which I have allowed myself to take with their ecclesiastical decisions and disciplinary provisions, has not been to bring them into disrepute, or even to find fault with their regulations. My sole object has been to show that Baptists do not stand alone in the exclusiveness with which they stand charged by Pedobaptist churches, and that they are consistent; while those who con demn them for their narrow-minded bigotry, are arrayed at the bar of public opinion, and stand there convicted and condemned as being constitutionally guilty in their ecclesiastical polity, of the very thing for which they so unsparingly condemn us. A single quotation, therefore, from a sermon preached by the Saviour of the world, shall close this little volume: "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged, and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." Matt. vii. 1, 2.

APPENDIX.

ON A REGULAR GOSPEL CHURCH.

A Regular Gospel Church described.—The Lord's Supper a Church Ordinance, and restricted to Church members.

THE original word (*ekklesia*), rendered *Church* in the New Testament, signifies an *assembly*. It was the ancient name appropriated by the Athenians, to the regular assembly of the free citizens, convoked by authority, for the transaction of public affairs. It may, however, apply to an irregular or tumultuous assembly of citizens (Acts xix. 32); to a lawful civil assembly (Acts xix. 30); or religiously, to the congregation of God's people, whether under the Hebrew theocracy, or under the Law of Christ. Hence the congregation of Israel is called "the church in the wilderness" (Acts vii. 38); and believers in the Lord Jesus Christ when united and organized into a body, are designated by the inspired writers, as "the Church of God," and "the Church of Christ." The titles are synonymous, because faith in God implies faith in Christ. "Ye believe in God; believe also in me." (John xiv. 1.)

The New Testament describes the Church of

Christ as being both *invisible* and *visible*. The *invisible* church includes the whole body of God's chosen people: those on earth and those in heaven. This church Paul calls "The general assembly and church of the first born, which are written in heaven." Heb. xii. 23. Of the members of this church it is said, "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his." As to the *visible* Church of Christ, it is made *so* by its own organization. Paul calls it "The house of God—the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth." (1 Tim. iii. 15.)

Christ's *visible* Church (Matt. xvi. 18,) is necessarily made up of particular churches, and in defining a particular church in regular gospel order, I object not to the one given by the compilers of the 39 Articles of the Church of England. "A congregation of faithful men, in which the true word of God is preached, and the sacraments duly administered, according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same." The converts of Pentecost, who constituted the main body of the church at Jerusalem, have by some been looked upon as *constituting* the first organized church of Christ. But this is evidently an error. For were not Christ's disciples "a congregation of faithful men?" Was not "the true word of God" preached to them by their Lord and Master? and were not "the sacraments duly administered to them, according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same?" If so, then the church was organized by the great Head himself while he was upon earth, and the converts of Pentecost became members of

that church. And hence, says Luke, Acts ii. 41: "The same day there were *added* unto them about three thousand souls." Observe—they "*were added unto them*," not organized out of them.

I will not contend that the Church of Christ was fully matured as an organization while he was upon earth. But its immaturity does not necessarily prevent its being a *regular* gospel church; for whatever deficiencies there may have been with regard to the appointment of its ordinary officers, such as *pastors* and *deacons*, while the apostles performed the whole work, it does not at all affect it as a regularly organized gospel church.

With these facts before us, we are willing to take the apostolic church at Jerusalem for our model as recorded in the second chapter of Acts. We have here 1. The *instrumentality* by which the church is raised up, which is the preaching of the gospel by his servants, and the influence of the Holy Spirit, freely imparted in answer to prayer. 2. The *materials* of which the church is composed. Those who had been instructed in the Apostles' doctrine—to whose hearts the Holy Spirit had applied divine truth—and who had gladly received the word into truly penitent and believing hearts. Such receive the remission of sins—the gift of the Holy Ghost by which they are renewed, sanctified, and made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, and prepared to become fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God. Such materials, and such only, are adapted to membership in Christ's visible church. 3. And into it they were *inducted*, not by conversion or faith alone, but by baptism on the profession of their faith in Christ

"Then they that gladly received the word were baptized." Their "gladly receiving the word" implies that they were believers; and their being baptized consequent upon their faith, shows that they were not baptized until after they believed: and their being admitted to membership in the church by, and after baptism as believers, also shows that the original church of Christ was composed of none but baptized believers. What then is a church of Christ but *a voluntary association of baptized believers under the law of Christ?* And with all deference to the opinions of great and good men who may assert the contrary, I will venture to assert, without fear of successful contradiction, that this is characteristic of *all* the churches of the New Testament—that it accords with the commission given by our Lord Jesus Christ to his first ministers, (Mat. xxviii. 19, 20, Mark xvi. 15, 16)—and therefore, that Baptist churches are the only churches of the present day, who are truly apostolic, and regularly organized according to gospel order.

A *visible* church it is very properly supposed may be *seen*—because it is a house, a temple, "a habitation of God through the Spirit, built up of lively stones" on Christ the foundation. It is therefore to be presumed that it has a *door of entrance*, and that this *door* is also *visible*. This presumption is so well-founded, and so explicitly taught in the New Testament, that whatever controversies there may have been between Baptists and Pedobaptists, they generally agree that baptism is the door of entrance into the visible church, and that it should precede

the Lord's Supper.* The points of disagreement are as to the *subjects*, and what is necessary to constitute Christian baptism.

As Baptists we regard immersion to be essential

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* CHRIST alone is the door into the Church Invisible. John x. 7—9. The manifestation of His image and spirit entitles the soul to universal Christian fellowship. Rom. xv. 7. But Christ as Lord over all things to the church, has appointed a visible avenue or door of entrance into His Visible Church, viz. BAPTISM, on the personal profession of faith in His name. Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. Acts ii. 38, 41, 42, 47.

It is true, some have called this view in question. "If," say they, "baptism be the *door* into the visible church, how can a man, once baptized, be *put out* of the church, let his conduct or creed become ever so corrupt? Can he be *unbaptized?*" Errors often arise, as in this instance, from misapplying or *straining* figures of speech. Let us study to obtain clear ideas. If any force appears in the objection derived from the figure of a door, as urged above, it is because men forget for the moment that a visible church of Christ, like some spacious building, *has more doors than one.* Carry out the figure fairly, and the objection vanishes. There is the front door of ADMISSION having its two folds, by baptism and by letter; there is the right side door of DISMISSION to sister churches; the left side door of EXCLUSION for persevering offence; and the great hall door of DEATH, which leads the holy to the celestial mansions. The "keys" to open and shut all those doors, (the last excepted,) are delivered alike by Christ, *to the members of every gospel church.* See Matt. xvi. 19, xviii. 18—20. Accordingly, we see the primitive churches in the actual use of them. Acts ix. 26—28. 2 Cor. iii. 1. 1 Cor. v.

Besides the doors of the church thus established by its Divine Head, there is one of modern construction, and more questionable shape. It is a sort of *trap door* called ERASION, through which erring or missing members are silently *dropped* into the ungodly world. But of this it is unnecessary to say more, than that it is sometimes convenient for purging our church lists from unknown and *unknowable absentees*, and to such its use should be confined. A false tenderness should not adopt it for *known offenders*, since it is only by mercy and truth that *iniquity* is purged. J. N. B.

to Christian baptism; because we believe that Jesus Christ taught it by example and command, and that his teachings were observed to the letter by the inspired apostles; and consequently that neither sprinkling nor pouring was ever thought of in the apostolic church as constituting valid baptism.

A similar remark is applicable to the proper *subjects* of this ordinance—that according to Christ's command, and the example of inspired men none but credible *believers* were immersed. And when immersed on profession of their faith in Christ, they were thereby made members of the church of Christ, and entitled to church fellowship. "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." Acts ii. 42.

The point to which the reader's attention is now directed, is this, *Is the Lord's Supper a church ordinance? And if so, are any but members of a regular gospel church allowed to partake of it?*

These questions have long since been answered. They are answered by the fact that *baptism is the first duty* subsequent upon believing. It was so with the converts of Pentecost. (Acts ii. 41, 42.) The church in Samaria—"But when they believed—they were baptized, both men and women." (Acts viii. 12.) The first Gentile church—"While Peter yet spake these words the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word." "Then answered Peter, Can any forbid water, that these should not be *baptized* which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be *baptized*." (Acts x. 44, also 46, 47, 48.) The first thing that is said of Lydia, "whose heart the Lord

opened" so that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul—is that she was *baptized.* (Acts xvi. 14, 15.) So "the same hour of the night" that the jailor "believed in God with all his house," he and all his were straightway baptized. (Acts xvi. 31–34.)

The argument may be thus stated: All true believers ought to be baptized—baptized believers are entitled to church fellowship—baptism being the first duty after believing, it follows that the Lord's Supper must be a church ordinance, and confined exclusively to church members. And so it has ever been regarded by the main body of orthodox divines from the days of Justin Martyr down to the present century. Dr. Dwight remarks: "It is an indispensable qualification for this ordinance, that the candidate for communion be a member of the visible church of Christ in full standing. By this I intend that he should be a person of piety, that he should have made a public profession of religion, and that he should have been baptized."

There can be no doubt as to the source whence these numerous divines have derived their views on this question. They were obliged to admit that baptism is the door into the visible church—a prerequisite to the Lord's Supper, and that none are entitled to the communion but members of the church of Christ. With these admissions, is not the Lord's Supper a church ordinance? We think so; not simply because these divines believed it, but because the word of God teaches it.

In addition to the reasons already given in favor of this point, there are two very important arguments which, in my mind, decide the question

The first is that the Lord's Supper was *instituted* by Jesus Christ in a church capacity. (See Matt. xxvi. 26–30; Mark xv. 22–26; Luke xxii. 19, 20.) By consulting these passages the reader will perceive that the Lord's Supper was not instituted by a mere command, but by an actual partaking of the symbols of Christ's broken body and shed blood, in their collective capacity, with the strict injunction of our Lord to continue its observance in like manner. "This *do* in remembrance of me."

Consequently the second argument is, that the Lord's Supper was *observed* by the apostolic direction, not only according to the form that Christ gave them, but in a church capacity. By consulting 1 Cor. xi., you will perceive that Paul corrects certain evils which had unfortunately been introduced into the church of Corinth, one of which was an *abuse* of the Lord's Supper in not observing it according to the *form* given by Jesus Christ at the time he instituted it. In stating the case, and reproving his Corinthian brethren, Paul takes it for granted that the Lord's Supper is a church ordinance. For when they celebrated it "they came together"—"they came together in one place." (verses 17, 18, 20.) He did not blame them for coming together in the church (*ekklesia*) collectively—this was all right, providing "they came together for the better, and not for the worse." Their offence consisted in making a literal feast of the ordinance, and thereby perverting it from its design, and profaning it. Hence he expostulates: "What! have ye not houses to eat and drink in? Or despise ye *the church of God?* Shall I praise you in this? I praise you not," v. 22.

The reader will remark, that the apostle takes it for granted that the Lord's Supper was celebrated by the church *in its collective capacity*. This fact was understood, and never questioned. The reasons must appear obvious. 1. It is an ordinance to which none have a right but church members. 2. It was instituted by Jesus Christ to be observed by his *church*. 3. To this agrees the practice of the churches of Christ while under the supervision of the inspired apostles.

By observing this ordinance otherwise, it loses much of its significance. Christ's church is his family, and the ordinance of the Lord's Supper is instituted to be observed by his family to commemorate his love to them, when they were purchased by his precious blood. It is an act by which they express their obedience, and their gratitude, and in which the *body* holds communion with Christ the head. And I may add, it is also an act by which the body expresses its *oneness*—that they are members one of another, and that these many members fellowship each other as being one body, thereby showing that "by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." Hence,

1. We learn that the church of Christ organized according to gospel order, must be composed of baptized believers. Baptism being confined exclusively to believers, it follows that there are no infants in the gospel church; for if they are to be baptized on the faith of their parents, the same authority by which they are baptized would require them to become communicants.

2. Pedobaptists who are united in a congregation may be regarded as a Church, and a Christian church, though they have never been baptized according to Christ's example and command; but they cannot be fellowshiped as a *regular gospel church.*

3. We learn the reason why Baptists do not commune with such. It is not because we do not regard them as Christians, but because they have not been baptized. To speak plainly, *they are not members of a regular gospel church.* We may extend to them the hand of *Christian* fellowship, but not the hand of *Church* fellowship.

4. This practice if rightly understood is not uncharitable. Pedobaptists will not commune with unbaptized believers, though they believe them Christians. In this we perfectly agree. We are even more liberal than they, because we *will* commune with all whom we baptize into the fellowship of the church; but they will not—they baptize *multitudes* whom they never admit to the Lord's Table. They are therefore *closer* than Baptists.

5. If the Lord's Supper is a church ordinance to be observed by a church collectively, then I ask, is it proper to admit to the communion with us even baptized believers who are members of Pedobaptist churches, and by their example *endorse* sprinkling and pouring for Christian baptism? Or to baptize believers with a view to their uniting with Pedobaptist churches, where we know that they will sanction by that act what is called infant baptism, as well as sprinkling and pouring, for that sacred ordinance? It does appear to me that *consistency* will not permit us in either of these ways to countenance what we as Baptists so distinctively

contend to be in opposition to gospel order. Can we conscientiously baptize any one, who we know will immediately nullify what he has done by walking disorderly—which he will do, if he sanctions either by word or act, any thing for a valid baptism but that of the immersion of believers?

6. This view of the subject will lead us to question the propriety of administering the Lord's Supper to the sick unless the church be convened. If our position be correct, then certainly it is not proper to administer it to individuals without first notifying the church of which they are members, and obtaining the appointment *by the church* of a sufficient number to represent them. I know it may be argued that the sick would, under these circumstances, be often deprived of the privilege of communion while upon their dying beds. The great question is, have we Bible authority for the practice? If we have not, then we should submit with pious resignation. There are many other privileges which the sick cannot enjoy, and it is a very great attainment to submit patiently to suffer the will of God concerning us—a much greater evidence of the existence and possession of the Christian graces than it would be to attend to any form which the gospel requires of us under other circumstances. The hour of affliction and death, of all others, is the one when we should rely upon Christ alone. The fewer forms we have to attend to *then*, the better. And the dear Redeemer has wisely ordered that his saints shall then be so circumstanced as to be constrained to say, "None but Christ!"

THE END.

THE

RELATION OF BAPTISM

TO THE

LORD'S SUPPER.

BY

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THE

RELATION OF BAPTISM

TO

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

CHAPTER I.

THE QUESTION INTRODUCED.

THE general argument for the Baptist practice of inviting to the Lord's Table only immersed believers may be briefly stated thus: Baptism is prerequisite to the Lord's Supper. Immersion is essential to baptism. Therefore, immersion is prerequisite to the Lord's Supper.

This conclusion logically flows from the premises, and can only be questioned by assailing either the one premise or the other. The mode of attack most common among con-

sistent Pedobaptists, who almost universally concede the first premise, is to assail the second, claiming that immersion is not essential to baptism. "Open-communion" Baptists, on the other hand, not questioning the second premise, attack the first, and deny that baptism is prerequisite to the Lord's Supper. It is with these last that the present discussion has to deal. We assume that no Baptist will deny, that the act of Christian baptism cannot be performed without an immersion, and propose to justify the practice of the Baptists by showing that *baptism is prerequisite to the Lord's Supper.* This is the real question at issue between the Regular Baptists and all "Open-communionists."

How shall the question be determined? We answer, not by any appeal to the authority of general custom—not by an *argumentum ad hominem* addressed to the majority of Pedobaptists, showing that this position is held by them, and that the question between them

and the Baptist is one of close baptism—but by a careful and searching examination of the primary grounds of reason and Scripture for inviting to the Lord's Table only baptized believers. It is true that the doctrine that baptism is a prerequisite to the Lord's Table has been the generally received doctrine of the Christian world, ever since the days of the Apostles, and that until the days of modern "open-communion" Baptists, it was the universal doctrine of Christendom, as has been frequently and abundantly shown by various writers in the discussion of this question; yet, notwithstanding this, we deem it to be the right of any man to challenge any doctrine or practice which he thinks untrue and unscriptural, regardless of human authority, or of the extent to which it may have prevailed; and it is no answer to such a challenge to show that the doctrine or practice in question is time-honored and prevalent. Is it true and Scriptural? This is the proper inquiry, and

the only satisfactory solution of the question is to be found in a review of the grounds of reason and Scripture upon which the controverted doctrine or practice is claimed to rest. This is the method which we propose to pursue in the present investigation.

CHAPTER II.

THE BURDEN OF PROOF.

We propose to demonstrate from Scripture, by a strictly logical argument, that baptism is prerequisite to the Lord's Table. This argument is disclosed in the next chapter. But before entering upon it, we will undertake to show in the present chapter, upon grounds of reason, that we are in strictness bound to prove nothing upon the subject—that the burden of proof properly rests upon the advocates of "open communion," and that they must fail of maintaining their position by reason of their inability to justify it affirmatively by Scripture precept or example, even though nothing should be advanced upon the side of the so-called "close communion."

It is well known that the advocates of

"open communion" are in the habit of inveighing against the opposite practice as unwarranted by Scripture, their principal stock in trade consisting of triumphant appeals for a clear "Thus saith the Lord" to justify the exclusion of any Christian from the Lord's Table. Now, it is proposed to demonstrate that these appeals are unreasonable, and that the burden, in fact, rests upon those who invite the unbaptized to the Lord's Table—that it is for them to justify, by a Scriptural warrant, the practice which they advocate.

The consideration of the question in this view was suggested to the mind of the writer through hearing a controversy, in which one of the disputants appealed to the other for a Scripture warrant to justify "open communion," and was met with the response that he would find it in the same chapter and next verse to where he would find "close communion." Neither one of the disputants was ready with an unequivocal proof-text directly

on the point, and the discussion seemed invested with some fog.

Now, where lies the proper solution of the difficulty? Evidently it must be found in determining on which side devolves the burden of proof. It is manifestly impossible to reject both theories, for one is the negation of the other. Either unbaptized Christians are entitled to partake of the Supper or they are not, and the observance of the Supper, so long as it is observed, must be characterized by the one view or the other. There is no middle ground between these two contradictories. Now, supposing the Scripture to have given no direct intimation on the matter, which shall it be? The proper answer may be discovered by applying that rule of reason known among logicians as the rule of the burden of proof. By this rule, in every case of direct controversy, where one position is the contradictory of the other, it necessarily rests upon one of the two sides to advance proof, the

opposite side being sufficiently sustained by the absence of proof to the contrary, and the burden of proof properly rests upon him who holds the substantial affirmative of the issue.

Any one in the least degree familiar with the science of law, or with the practice of courts, is acquainted with this rule as there applied. The complainant in a lawsuit must always prove his case, when that case is denied, and the defendant requires no proof in the absence of any from the complainant. He who affirms the existence of an obligation is in reason bound to prove it, and if no affirmative proof is apparent, we are justified in assuming the non-existence of that obligation, without being required to prove the negative. Let us again illustrate by reference to questions of religious obligation. If, for instance, it is affirmed that we ought to pray for the dead, or to invoke the Virgin Mary, or to sprinkle unconscious infants, these all being affirmative propositions—courses of action pro-

posed to be pursued as matters of affirmative obligation—we are manifestly justified in demanding the proof of those obligations from the word of God, which is, in such case, the only legitimate source of proof; and, in the absence of that proof, we are clearly warranted in assuming the negative of each proposition, and refusing to adopt either of those courses of action. Nor should we be bound to produce a "Thus saith the Lord" for not doing them, however loudly it might be called for.

Now let us apply this rule to the case in hand. Which is the substantial affirmative, and which the negative of the question under discussion? We say substantial affirmative, for it is the substance of a proposition, not the form, to which our rule applies. It is possible to clothe a negative proposition in an affirmative form and *vice versa*. Thus, we may say: "Open communion is right," or "close communion is right," and each would seem to be

an affirmative proposition. But it is manifest that the one is the precise negative of the other. Again, each proposition may be expressed negatively, thus: "Open communion is not right," and "close communion is not right." It becomes necessary, therefore, to inquire which of the two contradictory terms is the substantial affirmative. A little reflection will satisfy us that "open communion" is the true affirmative, and "close communion" is the true negative. The former is the affirmative, because it affirms the existence of an inherent right in unbaptized Christians to partake of the Lord's Supper, and a corresponding affirmative obligation on the part of the church to offer the elements of the Supper to them. The latter simply proposes the negative to that affirmative. The former proposes an affirmative course of action, viz.: that unbaptized Christians be invited to the Lord's Table. The latter simply proposes not to invite them. The former proposes a

positive thing to be done. The latter simply proposes not to do that thing. It is clear, therefore, that "open communion" is altogether affirmative in its nature—while "close communion," so far as it restricts, is purely negative. Nothing else can be made of it. Now, applying the rule of the burden of proof, it follows, incontrovertibly, that the burden rests on the man who invites the unbaptized to the ordinance, to show a Scripture warrant for the practice which he advocates, and unless that warrant be shown, the church is fully justified in refraining from that practice. When a single Scripture precept or example is adduced for offering the elements of the Supper to an unbaptized Christian, or to one not connected in full membership with a gospel church, it will then be time enough to pursue that course. Meanwhile, we may properly refrain from it without being bound to produce a positive "Thou shalt not" from the word of God, on precisely the same prin-

ciple that we may refrain from praying for the dead, or invoking the Virgin Mary, or sprinkling babies. The silence of Scripture can never authorize—it may forbid; and if the Protestant principle is a correct one, that the Bible and the Bible only is an all-sufficient rule of faith and practice, it does forbid all innovation upon the primitive Christian practice. Now, so far as we can see, "open communion" is such an innovation. No precept or precedent for it can be found in the word of God. We have positive warrant and example for observing the Lord's Supper as a church ordinance, and extending its privileges to baptized believers who are members of a New Testament church. The right of all such persons to partake of the Lord's Supper is, on all sides, unquestioned and unquestionable. But when it is asserted that that right equally inheres in unbaptized Christians, or persons outside the pale of church-membership, and that the church is under affirmative

obligation to extend its privileges to them and invite them to the Lord's Table, we are fully justified in calling for the proof of that assertion, and assuming the non-existence of that right and obligation until it be proven.

The truth above referred to, that a negative proposition may be clothed in an affirmative form, so as apparently to change the burden of proof, which really belongs to the substantial affirmative, may be further illustrated by an analysis of the proposition which is to be discussed in the following chapter. When we assert that baptism is prerequisite to the Lord's Supper, and our opponent denies it, we certainly appear to hold the affirmative, and he the negative. Do we not, then, properly hold the burden of proof upon this issue? An analysis of the proposition will show that we do not. We hold the affirmative of the issue in form, but not in fact. The proposition involves these two elements, which, taken together, form its precise equivalent: 1. Bap-

tism rightfully precedes the Lord's Supper; and 2. The Lord's Supper does *not* rightfully precede baptism. The first of these elements is, indeed, a substantially affirmative proposition, but it is one upon which there is no issue. It is undeniably true that a person may rightfully be baptized before coming to the Lord's Table. But the second element in the proposition is manifestly negative in substance, and it is this that presents the real issue. This real question in dispute is: May a person rightfully be invited to the Lord's Table before baptism? Our opponent says he may. We say he may *not*. Upon this issue he who invites the unbaptized, properly holds the burden of proof. This analysis may serve to show the importance of a careful consideration of any question in controversy, with a view to ascertaining upon which side really lies the burden of proof.

Nothing indeed is more common in controversy than the presentation of a question

at issue in such a form as apparently to throw the burden of proof upon the side to which it does not properly belong. This is frequently done with the question of baptism. Pedobaptists will insist with great energy that the Baptists are bound to prove that immersion is the *only* baptism, when in truth the whole burden of proof rests upon themselves, for the Baptist position upon this subject, in addition to the unquestionably true statement that immersion is baptism, involves nothing more than a denial of the validity of sprinkling or pouring, upon which issues the Pedobaptists clearly hold the substantial affirmative, and are bound to adduce proof. The same is true in regard to infant baptism. The assertion that believers are the *only* proper subjects of baptism, appears to require proof, but in fact needs none, for it is conceded that believers are proper subjects of baptism, and the only issue intended to be involved in the proposition is a denial that infants are proper

subjects of baptism, upon which issue the Pedobaptists clearly hold the entire burden of proof.

Reverting now to the subject under discussion, we would say that if the captious "open-communionist" is not satisfied with the arguments which may be adduced upon the side of his opponent, and persists in claiming that the negative to his position is not unequivocally made out, then let him be reminded that we are required to produce no proof of that negative, and that it devolves upon him to establish from Scripture the affirmative right and obligation which he asserts, by producing a precept or example to warrant the inviting of a believer to the Lord's Table before his baptism and connection with the church. With this reminder he may be silenced, provided he be not so thickly clothed with prejudice or sentimentality as to be impervious to reason.

CHAPTER III.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

We now address ourselves to the proof that baptism is prerequisite to the Lord's Table. We have just shown that this involves a substantially negative proposition, which presents the real issue in the case; and that we are, in fact, undertaking the gratuitous task of proving that the Lord's Supper does *not* rightfully precede baptism. But while a negative need not be proven, it does not follow that it is incapable of proof. We think in this case it is entirely susceptible of demonstration, and for present purposes are willing to retain in our argument the affirmative form of the proposition.

We do not profess to be able to accomplish the task proposed by producing any single

passage of Scripture, declaring directly and unequivocally: "Thou shalt *not* come to the Lord's Table before baptism." But we do claim that it may be proved by a strictly logical argument, based upon the teachings of Scripture, that baptism is a prerequisite.

There is a divinely established relation between the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, growing out of their nature and design, and necessitated by their mutual relation to a third term. That term is church membership. It is important that this third term should not be lost sight of, for it forms a necessary link in the argument. Much has been said about the relation of baptism to the Lord's Supper, with a tacit assumption that its relation is direct and immediate, ignoring the intermediate term of church membership. But this term should never be ignored, for it is through and on account of it that the relation exists between the two ordinances. The argument may be stated thus: Baptism was designed

and established as an initial rite, preceding and prerequisite to church membership. The Lord's Supper was designed and established as a church ordinance, following church membership, and constituting one of the privileges of church fellowship. It follows that baptism must precede the Lord's Supper. Or it may be stated more briefly and syllogistically thus: Baptism is prerequisite to church membership; church membership is prerequisite to the Lord's Supper; therefore, baptism is prerequisite to the Lord's Supper. Nothing can be clearer than that, if the premises of this argument are true, the conclusion is logical and irresistible. We will now examine and prove these premises separately.

I.—*Baptism is prerequisite to church membership.* This proposition hardly needs proof, for it is universally held as true, by Pedobaptists as well as by Baptists. Methodists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Lutherans, Congregationalists, Baptists, Free-will Baptists,

Roman Catholics, and other bodies, of whatsoever denomination, that claim to observe the ordinances of Christ, however any of them may view the relation of baptism to the Lord's Supper, are all agreed in holding that baptism must precede admission to church membership; and all alike require some act which they consider baptism, as a necessary condition and prerequisite of church fellowship. The common consent of Christendom to this position has its abundant warrant in the word of God. The ordinance was designed and instituted as an *initial* rite. It is the first duty required of believers after repentance and faith, and is Christ's own appointed mode of professing allegiance to him before the world. It is in its nature an initiatory badge of discipleship, required to be administered and received before admission to the church. The very first record of the progress of the gospel under the labors of the apostles, shows the order of church building in those days. "They that

gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers." This is apostolic example, and every statement in the New Testament implies the same order. First baptism, then addition to the church.*

II.—*Church membership is prerequisite to the Lord's Supper.* Just here is the turning point of the controversy. This proposition is not, like the first, universally admitted: but it is, nevertheless, equally susceptible of demonstration. Establishing this, our argument becomes impregnable. The proof of this proposition is two-fold. It is established, first,

* The truth of this position, so universally conceded, is manifest by reference to the following Scriptures: Matthew iii. 1–6; Matthew xxviii. 19, 20; Mark i. 4, 5; Mark xvi. 15, 16; Luke iii. 3; John iii. 22, 23; John iv. 1; Acts ii. 38–42; Acts viii. 12, 35–39; Acts ix. 18; Acts x. 44–48; Acts xvi. 15–33; Acts xviii. 8; Romans vi. 3, 4; Galatians iii. 27.

by the practice of the primitive church; and secondly, by the grant of excommunicating power to the church. We will now develop these proofs. First, the practice of the primitive church shows that the Lord's Supper was designed and established as a church ordinance, to be observed within the church, as one of its privileges, by church members. In the organization and establishment of the first church at Jerusalem under the Pentecostal revival, to which we have just referred (Acts ii. 42, 43), the divinely established order is clearly indicated. First, *conversion*—they "gladly received his word;" second, *baptism*—"they that gladly received his word were baptized;" third, *addition to the church*—those baptized "were added unto them;" and fourth, *church fellowship, including the Lord's Supper*—those who were added "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers." Again, we are told (Acts xx. 7) that "upon the first day of

the week, the disciples came together to break bread," indicating that they were in the habit of observing the Lord's Supper in their church capacity, as a church ordinance. Still again, the directions of Paul to the Corinthian church, in regard to the administration of the Supper (1 Cor. xi. 20–34), show clearly that it was considered a church ordinance. The expression "when ye come together therefore into one place," the reproof "despise ye the church of God," and the command "Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another," all indicate plainly that the Lord's Supper was looked upon as an institution in the church, and for the church in its organic capacity. *Secondly*, the grant of excommunicating power to the church, proves beyond the shadow of a doubt that the Lord's Supper is a privilege peculiar to church fellowship, from which the excluded are cut off by the act which separates them from the church. We are told by the Saviour (Matt. xviii. 17)

that if a trespassing brother neglect to hear the church, he is to be treated "as an heathen man and a publican." Now, how could he be treated "as an heathen man and a publican," if he were entitled, after exclusion from the church, to sit with them at the Lord's Table? Of what avail would exclusion from church fellowship be, if the excluded person could turn immediately about, and come as before to the Lord's Table with the church from which he was thrust out, upon the plea that the Lord's Supper is not a church ordinance? But that it is a church ordinance, from the privilege of which the excluded are to be deprived, is not left in doubt. It is explicitly and unequivocally declared by the apostle Paul (1 Cor. v. 11–13), "But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such a one, *no not to eat.* For what have I to do to judge

them also that are without? Do not ye judge them that are within? [Within what? Plainly the church.] But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore, put away from among you that wicked person." Here the power to exclude from the Lord's Supper is not only recognized, but expressly required to be exercised by the church, which proves conclusively that the ordinance is a privilege peculiar to church fellowship.

Nor is the power of excommunication confined to cases of immorality. It is expressly extended to all cases of departure from truth. The doctrines and ordinances are committed to the church to be guarded with zealous care. Says Paul: "Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you."—1 Cor. xi. 2. "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or our epistle."—2 Thess. ii. 15. "Now I beseech you, brethren,

mark them which cause divisions and offences among you, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them."—Rom. xvi. 17. "A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject."—Titus iii. 10. "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us."—2 Thess. iii. 6.

Now, in the face of these Scriptures, if it be true, as we believe it is, that infant baptism and the substitution of sprinkling and pouring for baptism are heretical departures from the teachings of the New Testament, from the ordinances as they were delivered to the saints, we are left no discretion: we are bound to exclude those who practice them from our church fellowship. But it was especially designed to show, in this connection, that the Lord's Supper is a peculiar privilege of the church membership. This is unquestionably

proven by the grant of excommunicating power to the church. We have thus established the second premise of our argument. The argument then stands, as a whole, impregnable; and the conclusion follows irresistibly:

THEREFORE, BAPTISM IS PREREQUISITE TO THE LORD'S SUPPER.

We are now prepared to see clearly the inconsistency in which all "open communion" Baptists are involved. They adopt the principle that baptism is prerequisite to church membership, but deny that it is prerequisite to the Lord's Supper. Holding that immersion is the only baptism, they will not suffer a Pedobaptist to join their church; or allow sprinkling, or pouring, or infant baptism to be practiced in their church; yet they will invite those who practice them to sit with them at the Lord's Table. But if they admit unbaptized persons and heretical departers from the truth to this ordinance, which is the

principal act and chief privilege of church fellowship, on what principle of consistency can they deny them the right to participate in the other and lesser duties of church fellowship? On what principle do they say to the Pedobaptist, "You may sit at the Lord's Table with us without being baptized; but you cannot vote with us until you are baptized"? This mingling of "open communion" and close fellowship is like the mingling of oil and water; they cannot consistently go together. Nothing can be plainer than that, on the "open communion" principle, no Baptist church has any logical foundation on which to stand. If baptism is not prerequisite to the Lord's Supper, it is prerequisite to nothing pertaining to the church, and we have no right nor power to insist upon its observance. In that view, we should be bound by consistency to say to all: "Take your choice; be immersed, or be sprinkled, or let water be poured upon you, or let the whole matter alone, just as

you please! Baptism is prerequisite to nothing! Come and join us in church fellowship, and disobey Christ about baptism! We have no power to hold you accountable!" Thus would Christ's ordinance be subverted, and his truth sold. It is just to this position that the "open communion" heresy would logically lead us. But we must not be led there. God says: "*Buy the truth, and sell it not.*"

CHAPTER IV.

NO MIDDLE GROUND TENABLE.

It has been strenuously insisted that there is a tenable middle ground between the position which restricts the Lord's Table to baptized believers and its direct opposite, upon which the propriety of the united participancy of Baptists and Pedobaptists may be justified.

It is argued that while baptism may be in strictness regarded as a Scriptural prerequisite to the Lord's Supper, yet it is only a *formal, ritual, ceremonial* prerequisite; that faith is the *essential, spiritual* prerequisite; that the spiritual is sovereign over the ritual; and that no honest mistake or irregularity as to the ritual qualification can deprive the sincere Christian believer of his right to come to the

Lord's Table, which is claimed to rest upon the essential ground of sincere faith.

We acknowledge very willingly that, in general, spiritual qualifications are more important than those that are merely ceremonial. But we cannot see how this concession affects the case under discussion. If two things are prerequisite to the enjoyment of any privilege, he who lacks either is of course shut out. A prerequisite is a prerequisite, whether it be spiritual or ceremonial. If the king in the parable had demanded that each guest at the wedding supper should be a person of high spiritual attainment, and also come in a certain kind of wedding garment, it would have been folly for any man to stand at the door in his ordinary garb, and claim admittance because his spiritual attainments were more valuable than any mere material robe. The porter might justly have answered, "I honor your high character as it deserves; but here is the king's command, which says, you must

have the wedding robe also. Because you lack that prerequisite, you cannot be admitted."

Now, baptism has been made by the Lord a ceremonial prerequisite to admission into his visible church on earth, and to all its peculiar privileges, including suffrage, office-bearing, and the Lord's Supper. He who has not provided himself with it, no matter what other qualification he may have, cannot be admitted. Nor can we acknowledge it to be right, that a spiritual requirement of Christ should supplant, or exercise any sovereignty over, one that is merely ceremonial. Sovereignty belongs not to law, whatever may be its character or relative importance, but solely to the lawgiver; and if our Lawgiver has been pleased to establish two prerequisites to the membership of his visible church, the one spiritual, and the other ceremonial, we have only to acquiesce in his regulations, without claiming any sovereignty for one of his re-

quirements over the other, or for ourselves over any of his requirements.

But it may be further observed that there is no reasonable ground for placing such royal emphasis upon faith as the *essential* prerequisite to the Lord's Supper, and characterizing baptism as a mere formal, ritual, ceremonial qualification; *for what is the Lord's Supper more than baptism?* The one ordinance is in no respect of any higher nature than the other; and if the one be a mere formal, ritual, ceremonial observance, so also is the other. Now there is manifestly no incongruity in making one ceremony an essential prerequisite to another ceremony. Circumcision, under the Mosaic economy, was made a ceremonial prerequisite to the ceremony of the passover; and, being such prerequisite, it was just as essential to the lawful observance of the passover as was belief in the true God. This was entirely congruous. So now there is nothing more incongruous in the establishment of

baptism as a ceremonial prerequisite to the ceremony of the Supper; and, being made such prerequisite, it is just as essential as faith, to the lawful observance of the Supper. That is surely a false and exaggerated view which makes of greater relative importance the Lord's Supper than the Lord's baptism, and leads to the degradation of the latter ordinance below the level of the former.

If there be any value in the distinction between faith as a spiritual qualification, and baptism as a ceremonial qualification, for the Lord's Supper; and the principle of congruity be observed,—the distinction certainly authorizes no further conclusion than this, that he who possesses the spiritual qualification of faith alone is entitled thereby to feed upon Christ spiritually, but that he must also possess the ceremonial qualification of baptism, in order to be entitled to the ceremonial observance of the Supper. The truth is that neither baptism nor the Lord's Supper is of

any value without faith, and that both faith and baptism are essential prerequisites for admission to the Lord's Table.

Finally, it is demonstrable that this so-called middle ground is no middle ground at all; but that its central principle, if adopted, leads irresistibly to the overthrow of the Baptist doctrine of immersion, and logically demands the destruction of the Baptist denomination. The central, pivotal principle of this theory is that no irregularity in the act of baptism, occasioned by an honest mistake of a sincere Christian believer as to its mode, should debar such believer from the Lord's Table. But it being established and conceded that "baptism is a ritual, ceremonial prerequisite to the Lord's Supper," it follows that the honestly-mistaken believer is entitled to the ordinance, if at all, upon the ground that his faith and honesty so far predominate, and exercise such sovereignty over the mere ceremonial act or form of baptism, that his mis-

taken irregularity is cured thereby, and the prerequisite of baptism must be regarded as substantially complied with. If this be so, then it is not true that immersion is essential to baptism, and the honest substitution of sprinkling or pouring for immersion is a mere irregularity, not going to the substance of the act, nor rendering it invalid. Now, manifestly, whatever is sufficient to make baptism valid as a qualification for the Lord's Supper, must also make it valid as a qualification for church-membership; for there is only "one baptism," and there is no middle ground between validity and invalidity. Hence, on this theory, every believer who has been honestly sprinkled or poured upon under the claim of baptism, is a baptized believer, and entitled to be received into church membership as such; and it follows that no Baptist church has any right to exist.

The truth is, there is no middle ground tenable between the regular Baptist position of restricting the Lord's Supper to baptized

believers on the one hand, and the extreme position of "organic church unity" on the other hand, based upon the erroneous and truth-subverting principle, that honesty in the wrong is an equivalent for the right, and maintaining that all honest Christians should unite organically upon a basis of spiritual faith, regardless of sincere differences in doctrine and practice. This latter position is refuted in the following chapter.

CHAPTER V.

TRUTH THE ONLY BASIS OF CHURCH UNITY.

It is maintained by some zealous advocates of church unity that all Christians ought to unite organically in church fellowship, on the basis of sincere faith in Christ, being required to agree only upon points essential to salvation; and allowed, as a matter of right, to maintain all honest differences of doctrine and practice upon other points.

If this view be correct, it is evident that the Baptist position in regard to the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, and, indeed, the whole constitution of the Baptist churches is radically wrong; in fact, it would follow that the constitution of every other church is equally wrong. But the view is not correct. We

propose to show that it is both impracticable, and false in principle.

It is impracticable. It seems, indeed, plausible. There is an apparent propriety in the union of all Christians in church fellowship upon the simple ground that they are Christians; that they have a common salvation, and are spiritually one in Christ. But such a union, resting solely upon such a ground, is impossible. What is the thing proposed? It is not individual Christian fellowship; but *organic church unity*. But how can there be organized church unity without an organized church? And how can there be an organized church without an agreed and determined form of church constitution and government? Now by the very necessity of the case, in the constitution and government of the proposed church, there must be a departure from the fundamental principle on which, by this theory, it is proposed to be organized—that is, there must be an agreement of the members upon a form of church constitution

and government, a point clearly not essential to salvation. What kind of a church, indeed, would that be in which one member would be permitted to hold and practice Episcopalianism; another Presbyterianism; and another Congregationalism; because, forsooth, each is honest and sincere in his views of church government? The impracticability and absurdity of the theory is manifest. There must be an agreement of the members upon some one determinate form of church constitution and government. But, this being the case, the theory in question is overthrown; for it rests upon the distinction between points essential to salvation and those not so essential, and derives thence all its plausibility and force. If Christians who enjoy a common salvation and have been made spiritually one in Christ cannot, solely upon that ground, be made one in church fellowship, but, in order to constitute a church, must agree upon a church constitution, why may they not agree upon the Baptist con-

stitution as well as upon any other? Clearly, it could not be objected to such an agreement, that the Baptist constitution incorporates and insists upon points not essential to salvation; for the same objection lies of necessity against every possible church constitution. The theory in question must therefore be rejected as impracticable.

It is also false in principle. The fundamental principle of this theory is that the possession of faith in Christ so far justifies an honest error of the Christian upon any point not essential to salvation, as to make that error equivalent to truth, and give a right to its recognition and retention. This principle is false. Error is, in its nature, essentially wrong, and no amount of honesty or Christian faith can make it otherwise. Faith in Christ does not obliterate or alter the essential distinction between truth and error, between right and wrong, or in the smallest degree lessen the obligations to maintain truth and

right, in opposition to error and wrong. Faith in Christ does indeed secure forgiveness of sin and error, else none could be saved; but it is nothing less than blasphemy to assert that the divine forgiveness implies a sanction of wrong, or gives a license to maintain a departure from the truth under any plea whatsoever. Honesty may, indeed, palliate error, but can never justify it. It is certainly worse to be wrong dishonestly and wilfully, than to be wrong through an honest mistake of judgment; but no amount of honesty can ever make it right to be wrong, or entitle wrong to be recognized as right. So far and so fast as sin and error are discovered, they should be forsaken and discountenanced, and not retained or excused. Every Christian is under a perfect and perpetual obligation to discover and maintain the truth. "Buy the truth and sell it not," is the command of Holy Writ. (Prov. xxiii. 23.) Nor is this obligation merely personal and individual. It pertains to every

church member in his related capacity as a constituent of the church, and requires him to see to it, as far as in him lies, that the church of which he is a member shall be a "pillar and ground of the truth." (1 Tim. ii. 15.) A church is composed of individuals, and can do nothing as a church except by the combined action of its individual members. Hence, in order that the church should maintain the truth, it is incumbent upon each individual member to insist that the truth be maintained by it.

We have already seen that, in order to the existence of a church organization, it is a necessity of the case that there should be some agreed form of church constitution and government. But is it reasonable to suppose that, in so important a matter as this, we are left without any inspired rule of action, to consult nothing but our own whims or views of expediency? Such a supposition is neither reasonable nor true. God's word is a practical

guide, containing complete and sufficient rules of duty. The New Testament discloses a model of church constitution and government, including the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper as a part of that constitution. From this model we are not at liberty to depart; but all Christians in their church capacity, are sacredly bound to follow and maintain it in its integrity. We are thoroughly convinced that a fair and full investigation of the word of God, under the promised guidance of the Holy Spirit, will disclose the truth of the following proposition:

The New Testament model of a visible Christian church is an assembly of baptized (immersed) believers in Christ, associated in a democracy under the laws of Christ; having pastors and deacons for their officers; maintaining faith in Christ, baptism (immersion) after faith, and an orderly Christian walk, as qualifications of membership; and observing the Lord's Supper as a church ordinance.

Believing this to be the Scriptural model of a church constitution, we hold that every church ought to be framed according to it. We do not say that the name of church should be denied to every organization of Christians departing from this model. The word "church" has a wide colloquial sense, and may be applied generically to a very irregularly constituted assembly of Christians. But we do say that no assembly of Christians, however eminent they may be individually in certain Christian graces, is entitled to be considered as a Scripturally organized church of Christ, unless it is constituted according to Christ's rule. Individual Christians are entitled, as Christians, to individual Christian fellowship; but in order to be entitled to the church fellowship of a regular church of Christ—one formed according to the model which the Lord has given us in the New Testament—they must become members of such a church.

It may be said that none but Baptists will agree that there is such a Scriptural model of church constitution as has been described. We doubt not that if any who agree to it are not Baptists, they will be very likely to become such, but we insist that it is the truth, and none the less so, because Baptists hold it. Let those who do not agree to it exercise their own judgment, and pursue their own course to the contrary, if they choose. They must answer for it to God. But so long as Baptists are fully convinced that a model of church organization is revealed in the word of God; and that, guided by the Spirit of truth, they have ascertained what that model is,—they are in duty bound to build their churches according to it, without the omission or alteration of any part, or the recognition of rightfulness in any departure therefrom. It is true that they cheerfully concede to others the same liberty of judgment and action which they exercise for themselves; but there is an essential dif-

ference between a recognition of liberty and an admission of rightfulness. Full liberty of independent action must of course be cheerfully conceded, but error must be neither embraced nor sanctioned.

We acknowledge that the organic church unity of all Christians is exceedingly desirable; but we do not believe it to be desirable at the expense of truth, or at a sacrifice of the divine model of church constitution. The revealed will of God is too sacred a thing to be sacrificed for any consideration whatsoever. Let the hand of Christian fellowship be cordially extended between individual Christians of every name, upon the broad basis of Christian brotherhood; for this is only to recognize the truth of spiritual unity. But let not Christian charity be perverted to the sanctioning of error; for "charity rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth." Let the inspired model of a visible Christian church be followed and maintained as the only pattern after which

a church can be rightfully framed. Let the divinely established conditions of visible church fellowship be faithfully observed, and no departure therefrom be recognized as lawful. And let the Great Head of the church be trusted to vindicate his own model of church constitution, by bringing about the organic church unity of his people, in his own good time, upon the enduring basis of his own precious truth.

THE END.

PROTESTANT PEDOBAPTISM

AND THE

DOCTRINE OF A CHURCH.

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PROTESTANT PEDOBAPTISM AND THE DOCTRINE OF A CHURCH.

"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."—*John* i. 12, 13.

AS on the forehead of the high priest who stood in the presence of God there was bound the glittering gold with "Holiness to the Lord" written upon it, so on the brow of his churches has Jesus inscribed these words of light, that they might herald to all the world, that his churches are the manifest miracles of his grace. These words proclaim the genealogy, in eternity and in time, of every soul known as his.

Mark the steps of approach—all who come—receive him by faith—they become sons of God—

are justified and adopted—and they do this, not by right of inheritance—not by the unaided exercise of any or all natural gifts—but because they are endowed with the very life of God—are born of him by the Spirit.

THE ONE WAY OF SALVATION.

There is but this one way of salvation for all men—for any man. Its oneness and its perfect adaptation for all speak the love and the wisdom of God. God sends his word either written, or spoken by human voice. This word, revealing God's way of salvation through Jesus Christ, is made powerful in the hearts of those that read or hear by the Holy Spirit. By that Spirit they loathe sin and believe in Jesus as their surety and atonement. With him they die and with him they rise. For his sake they are justified, accepted as righteous before God. He was made sin for them that they might be made the righteousness of God in him; and by the Spirit they live unto God, increasing in holiness and in knowledge of their God and Saviour. There is but this one way of salvation revealed. It is revealed for those who can hear and believe. We are never told how God saves those dying in infancy, or those who are bereft of reason. We

believe that he does save *all* infants who die, and saves them through Jesus' blood, but in a way inscrutable to us. Certainly, so far as we have any means of judging, he does not save them by faith.

Within the sphere of our consciousness, and according to the Scriptures, the invariable order of the way of salvation is—*first*, the word, preached or read; *second*, faith; *third*, the life of faith. The order of God's gracious purpose and acts for the salvation of a soul is—*first*, he chooses; *second*, he calls by his Spirit through the word, communicating life and its exercise, faith; *third*, he justifies; *fourth*, he glorifies—receives into his eternal kingdom.

This is the Scriptural order, and all Protestant confessions of faith agree in this order. There is no evidence in Scripture that this order is ever reversed, or any step omitted or transposed. The confessions of all saints agree that this is the way by which they are led.

In giving salvation God never deals with men in the mass, always with individual souls. It is a testimony to the unspeakable worth of the soul, to the freedom and mighty responsibility of each man, that God condescends to deal with him as though there were no other man on earth.

With each one rests the decision of the question of questions—life or death.

FALSE VIEWS OF THE CHURCH.

For 1500 years there has hung around the word church and its synonyms in other languages an amount of mystery, to which the New Testament gives no warrant. With some denominations of Christians the church is often spoken of as though, apart from the individuals of which it is composed, "it were a moral person standing to Christians in the same relation in which a mother does to her children. To the church, Christians are said to owe their spiritual birth, the church educates her children, nourishes them with her ordinances, prays for them, and, if needs be, corrects them." That such an idea is a pure figment of the imagination; that no such thing exists as this corporate entity, this metaphysical abstraction, this abstract personality performing acts of thought and will distinct from those of the individual members who compose the body,—is patent to every reader of the New Testament.

With a church, as with each Christian life, there is an intimate, essential connection between the outward form and the internal spirit—between doctrine and life. The tree is known by

its fruit. There can be no contradiction between God's doctrines and his precepts. The positive commands of God are—must be—in absolute harmony with his doctrines. There can be no contradiction between his doctrines of salvation and his precepts concerning his churches. What his churches are to be, how constituted, how maintained, is not a question of subordinate interest, but of paramount importance. One thing is certain, they must be, in their origin and continuance, in exact accordance with the doctrines of God's grace to man. They were to be the visible manifestations of those doctrines to the world—"the epistle of Christ written with the Spirit of the living God." If our constitution of a church is scriptural, it will be in harmony with the other doctrines of God's grace. If it is unscriptural, it will conflict with those doctrines, and before the world and on the minds of the members who uphold such a church will certainly tend to obscure, if not to efface those doctrines.

Both Luther and Calvin saw clearly that the central point of their controversy with Rome was just this doctrine of a church. Luther says: "What is the dispute between the Papists and us? It is the dispute about the true Christian

church. The dispute is not whether we must believe the church—whether there is a church—but which is the true church." Calvin says: "We only contend for a true and legitimate constitution of the church, which requires, not only a communion in the sacraments which are the signs of a Christian profession, but, above all, an agreement in doctrine."

Luther and Zwingle and their followers separated from and condemned the Romish Church, not on account of the Romish constitution of a church, but on account of the false doctrines which Rome taught respecting salvation. In thus separating from Rome and preaching the truth, they deserve the highest commendation. But they retained essentially the Romish constitution of the churches.

The central point of the controversy between Baptists and Protestant Pedobaptists is not the doctrines of grace—for, thanks be to God, we generally agree there—but it is the constitution of a church. And this we hold to be a point of supreme importance for the free course of the word of God on earth. Baptists are thought to be great schismatics because, agreeing with evangelical Protestants on the great doctrines of the gospel, antecedent to the doctrine of a

church, they refuse to acknowledge Pedobaptist churches as rightly formed, or to hold their administration of the ordinances as scriptural. Having granted so much, it is assumed we ought to grant everything else. We refuse to walk together where we think others offend against Christ's truth; but we joyfully walk with them where we are agreed. And this point of difference involves not merely that which is outward and subordinate, but draws in its train immediate consequences which affect the doctrines of God's grace to sinners.

The earliest Protestant divisions of the Pedobaptists were between the Lutherans and Zwinglians, afterwards Calvinists. They differed, and differ still, mainly in their views of the Lord's Supper.

The Presbyterians differed from the English Established Church mainly on the orders in the ministry and their powers.

The Independents differed from the Presbyterians on the powers of the individual churches.

The Methodists differ from other evangelical Protestants in their aristocratic form of church government.

But they all have at the base the same constitution of the churches. And the Baptist, exist-

ing before either of these denominations, stands opposed on deepest principle to that constitution Our opposition is not like that between themselves, on points of acknowledged secondary interest, but on one point of primal fundamental importance.

The New Testament uses the word church only in two senses—one including all true believers, at all times and in eternity; the other including those who have professed to believe in Jesus and are united by the ordinances into separate local societies.

If the order and plan of salvation has been correctly stated, there are no materials on earth out of which to form a church—God's society—God's assembly—but those who are born of God. That unbelievers are found in the churches is not due to the defect in the model, but to the defect that inheres in human judgment.

THE CHURCHES, THE MIRACLES OF THE SPIRIT.

The churches, then, were to be the flower and fruit of salvation. God's choice, God's call by his Spirit and word, regeneration, faith, justification, adoption—such is the gracious process necessary to the formation of a church; for it is the process invariably pursued in the formation of

all its parts. The churches were by their very existence to testify to all the way by which they were led. A church so formed is the constant manifestation of the Spirit. Let the Spirit cease to convert men and bring them to such a church, and it dies out with the first generation. How different would have been the story of church history if, instead of bringing into the churches by blood, by the will of the flesh, by the will of man, the churches had been kept to their original constitution, dependent only on the Spirit of God for increase.

The Baptist holding these views is compelled to object most strenuously against the constitution of all Pedobaptist churches, not simply in the interest of the form of baptism, but far more in the interest of the only way of salvation. Their churches are, to our view, formed in direct contravention of God's way of salvation; their constitution is at war with the doctrines of God's grace, and at war, too, with their own confessions of faith. We are exhorted to renounce our views of the form of baptism, so that there may be no division between us. But back of our view of the form of baptism there lie difficulties in the way of union far greater than any outward form. We do not mean to insinuate that we do not be-

lieve them Christians. God forbid that we should harbor such a thought of the thousands on thousands who in so many points have adorned and illustrated Christian life, and who are now zealous for God and his Christ. We believe them, as bodies, to be eminent in Christian virtues. We do not sit in judgment on their Christianity to condemn it. But this we say, that while we may so highly regard them, we are compelled to bear our testimony—unequivocal and earnest—against what we esteem to be grievous errors against the doctrines of God.

PEDOBAPTIST ERRORS.

1. *It is an error to admit unbelievers to church membership.*

While in all Pedobaptist confessions the very essence of the churches is made to consist in faith, they are guilty of the palpable contradiction of intentionally and constantly introducing those who do not believe—who cannot believe—as members of churches.

I know that each Pedobaptist denomination has its own mode of explaining this away—each differing from the other. Either one of two things they should do before inviting a Baptist to renounce his clear views and consistent prac-

tice concerning the church—either alter their confessions or cease their practice, which is at war with their confession. We agree with them that the very essence of the churches is faith, as it is the essence of the life of each member; and we rejoice that they confess this; and we beseech them, for the glory of our Master and Redeemer, to put away the inconsistency of their practice.

2. *It is an error to make church membership precede the hearing of the word.*

This leads us to notice another difficulty of much more moment. The Scriptures know nothing, we know nothing, and Protestant confessions know nothing, of churches which are not the body of Christ. To be in the church is, according to the New Testament, to be in Christ. Not that the church and Christ are synonymous; but because none were to be admitted but those who gave evidence of being in Christ. Now, the Scriptures represent the external instrument of our union with Christ and his church to be invariably his word. "We are born again by the word of God," Peter says, (1 Pet. i. 23); and Paul, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God," (Rom. x. 17); "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" (Rom. x. 14); "Of his own will begat

he us by the word of truth," (James i. 18). But if before hearing, before faith, before the apprehension of the word, either an outward ordinance or the collective church is placed as the means of union with Christ, there arises a positive contradiction between the Scriptures and the constitution of such a church. Nay, the union with Christ by that act is asserted to be, not internal and spiritual, but external and formal. The first thing needed is, not the word and faith, but the church. If the church ever rightly—according to God's purpose—precedes the word in the salvation of any soul, then why do we never hear the apostles exhorting men to join the church that they may come to Christ, but always hear them insisting on attention to the word, that men may be saved? By the constitution of Pedobaptist churches, a grievous injury is done to the word of God and to thousands of souls, in reversing God's order of salvation. The rightful place of the word is usurped by the church. The place of absolute truth for the enlightenment of the soul is taken by the broken lights of human representatives of that truth; and with thousands there is ever a film over their eyes as to the relation the word holds to the church and to their salvation.

Nor does the error stop here, as all church history shows us. When the word and its work are put away as prerequisites of church membership, and the church assumes the place of the word, and is the external means for uniting souls to Christ, that which is merely formal and outward becomes its greatest power, and that which is internal and spiritual is secondary. That which is outward in it assumes immense importance in the eyes of its upholders, and its polity and government are to be maintained at every expense for the good of souls.

It is one of the most marvellous, enigmatical facts of history, that all Protestant Pedobaptist churches, coming forth from the tyranny of Rome, and protesting against her tyranny over the consciences of men, should have become in a few years almost as bitter persecutors for their form of faith as Rome was for hers. Luther and Melancthon persecuted; Zwingle and Calvin persecuted; the Reformed Church of Holland persecuted; the Established Church of England, the Presbyterians of Scotland, the Presbyterians and Independents of England, the Congregationalists of New England—all fell into the same error as Rome had done, and defended it on the same grounds. Can this strange inconsistency be ex-

plained? There is only one solution apparent. Differing as they did from Rome, yet they actually formed their churches on the same basis as that of Rome. The church was put before the word; and, in their view, the salvation of souls demanded its existence; and with a quiet conscience its upholders could punish, with all bodily misery and deprivation of goods, those who denied its validity.

On the other hand, from the first hours of the Reformation till the present, no Baptist church can be shown which has ever favored or defended religious persecution. Nor can any Baptist author be found who has favored or defended the same. Their witness has been clear and unmistakable on the side of religious liberty, not tolerance—freedom, not sufferance—not for themselves alone, but for all men. This, surely, is not due to any intellectual or moral superiority on the part of Baptists, but must be due to a principle that inheres in their religious thinking; and I take it, that principle is to be found in just this holding the precedence of the word of God to the church. In their view every man must come face to face with the word of God. By that he must be convinced, and must decide the supreme question concerning his soul's life, before he

possesses any qualification for membership in a church. Having referred him there, the decision is between him and his God—and no outward means of flattery or of punishment can effect the change, which is the work of God's Spirit alone.

When a Pedobaptist argues with a Romanist against the fundamental constitution of the Romish Church, he always takes the full Baptist position—but when he argues in favor of the Pedobaptist churches, he is compelled to take the Romish position and use Romish arguments.

3. *It is not in accordance with the Scriptural plan to make church membership precede regeneration.*

The church is according to the Scriptures a society of those born of God, regenerate persons. This birth, this regeneration, is the work of the Spirit alone; and its result, immediate, invariable, and indestructible, is life—not capacity for the reception of life—not powers which may develop into life, but life itself. So that they who are born again, born of God, live unto him a life which is totally different from their natural life; and by this life alone can the new birth, regeneration by the Holy Spirit, be recognized. But the wilful, persistent introduction of unregenerate persons into a church, and ascribing to them

any interest whatsoever in it, is to do despite to the Creator Spirit who formed the world, and forms every soul that is born again. They are thereby asserted to have been born unto God by blood, by the will of the flesh, by the will of man; which to our eyes appears to be as flat a contradiction of God's plain word as it would be possible to make.

All who come to God, all who belong to him, all who have any part or lot with Jesus, are represented by the Scriptures as called by the Spirit—"called out of darkness into his marvellous light"—called according to God's purpose. This is the peculiar office of the Holy Spirit. All who are so called, do come to God. This word in its use in the Scriptures does not signify a mere external speaking the invitation of God, but it also means the sure operation of the Spirit on the heart, by which one is made gladly and longingly to hear the word of God. Those thus called are the sons of God. "For ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." But to teach or imply that those who have never known the gracious work of the Spirit, and of course give no evidence of it, are in any sense

members of Christ, is to strike at the very root of salvation--the work of the Holy Spirit. The work of the Spirit precedes the reception of Jesus, which is accompanied with the gift of the privilege of becoming the sons of God.

And just as surely do the Scriptures teach us that where the Holy Spirit does not thus work to bring to life, and open the heart and the ear to long after and hear the word of God, there death reigns. There are, there can be, no neutrals between the state of death and life. Men are either dead in trespasses and sins, or they are alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; or as another Scripture states it, is death, "for the mind of the flesh is death." And that which is born of the Spirit is spirit; or as Paul states it, is life, "for the mind of the Spirit is life." "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his." But when the Spirit calls, then he "bears witness with our spirits that we are the children of God. And if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ." If the Spirit has given one life, if the Spirit has called him out of darkness into marvellous light, then, but not till then, has he any qualification, or any right to admission to the household of God, un-

less we acknowledge that there may be dead members of him who is Life itself.

It may be objected to us that there are undeniably many members of Baptist churches who give no evidence of spiritual life. We grant it. But no Baptist church ever admitted them knowing them to be dead. They desired admission and gave credible evidence on their entrance that they were born of the Spirit—and on that evidence they were admitted. That afterwards they proved to be dead, only shows that men striving after God's model may often be led astray by Satan, transformed into an angel of light.

4. *It is an error to allow the church to take the place of faith.*

We have seen that the church cannot be put in the place of the word, that it cannot be put in the place of the Holy Spirit, for that would be to suppose the earthen vessel to be formed without clay, and without the potter's hand. Neither can the church be put in the place of *faith*. The word is the first external means of our union with Christ—it is the visible manifestation of Jesus. By the Spirit life is given to behold Jesus in his word, and to trust in him. The evidence of this work of the Spirit, and the

only internal, spiritual means of union with Christ within our consciousness, is faith. By this—not as a meritorious cause, but as a prerequisite—by this alone are we justified, accepted as righteous for Jesus' sake before God. Without faith it is, and ever has been since the fall, impossible to please God. We "are children of God by faith in Christ Jesus," (Gal. iii. 16). And this faith, this spiritual apprehension of Jesus as our Saviour, is the sovereign gift of God. "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves—it is the gift of God."

In our thinking we may separate the work of the Spirit in regeneration, which is below our consciousness, from the result of that work, faith, which is our conscious act. But really they never are divided. The life the Spirit gives is the life that exists by faith. And of no soul in this world can it be said that it is saved, unless it believes in Jesus. Faith is the first opening of the eye as the dead comes forth from the tomb at the Spirit's call. It is the exercise of the resurrection-life. It is the conscious means and evidence that the soul lives. To produce faith in any soul is just as great a miracle, is just as marvellous an exhibition of omnipotence, as the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. And so

the apostle prays that the Ephesians may know "what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead."

Before the exercise of faith—before this conscious trust in Jesus as our sole surety and intercessor—whatsoever we do, however excellent it may appear, is sin, for it does not spring from the right motive. The Scriptures and the experience of every converted man teach this same truth. It is only faith in Christ, not our works, that renders us pleasing in the sight of God. Then we do, for the first time, put away our own righteousness, which is of the law, and trust only in that righteousness which is through the faith of Christ—the righteousness which is of God by faith.

This faith is inseparable from its fruit—works for God. The two are as closely compacted as regeneration and faith. But every Bible reader sees the vast difference between saying, that regeneration proceeds from faith, and that faith proceeds from works—or *vice versa*. In the one case salvation is man's work; in the other it is God's gift. In the one case we assert the merit of works; in the other the pure grace of God.

Most Protestant denominations hold these truths as strongly as we do, and have and do set them forth with power. Our controversy with them is not on these truths, but upon the utter inconsistency of the constitution of their churches with these most vital points. While holding these precious doctrines they do put their churches in the place of faith—for thousands of their members are taught that by the ligature of the church they are somewhat united to Christ, when they are sure, and the churches are sure, that they have no faith. Luther and Calvin, and their followers in Europe and England, contended with all their gigantic powers against Rome for the scriptural doctrine of justification by our faith only. Yet no sooner did they begin to constitute their churches than they practically denied all their words and justified Rome—for they admitted most of their members on the faith of others.

With perfect justice a German Roman Catholic author of this century, writing on the Reformation in Germany and the fierce persecution of the Baptists of that day by the Protestants, asks the Protestants, How such persecution in that century or in this can be defended by them? The Protestants, he says, left the Romish Church

following their great dogma, justification by faith alone. They proclaimed the doctrine in words, but denied it in their churches. The Baptists formed their churches in perfect accordance with this central doctrine of Protestantism, and yet they were more bitterly persecuted by Protestants than by Romanists. So much so, that Baptists fled from Protestant lands to find a refuge in the tenderer mercies of Romanism.

When the church is put in the place of faith in the order of salvation—when one is said to be united to Christ, a member of Christ, before he exercises faith—they reverse the whole gospel scheme of salvation. By that act it is practically declared that salvation is of works, not of faith. It is not "of faith that it might be by grace." But the apostle declares that the promise of salvation is "by faith that it might be of grace;" "and if by grace, then it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace, otherwise work is no more work." We submit that that practice which makes salvation of works, and that confession which makes salvation of grace, are not exactly consistent; nay, they are contradictions of each other. And with all such im-

perious contradictions one or the other must obtain the mastery and banish its adversary.

Augustine held justification by faith, but he also held to a union with Christ by the church. His was the master mind of the ancient Catholic Church, and Rome has logically followed out his views of the church, and by necessity banished his scriptural doctrine.

To see the most pernicious effects of this gross inconsistency of practice with profession of the truth, we must go, not to the denominations of our own land, but to the Protestant churches of Geneva, France, Holland, Germany, England. Supported by the State, with all the citizens of the land members of the churches, with numerous ministers who savor of the charnel house, who have long forgotten and ceased to preach that salvation is "of faith that it might be by grace;" no confession of faith is required of the members, no discipline is exercised, so that you find great numbers of these members who deny the divinity of Jesus and the existence and our need of the Holy Spirit. Is it surprising that the idea of conversion to God with them is esteemed equivalent to lunacy; and a suggestion that they are not just such churches as the New Testa-

ment sets forth, is met with the scorn such ignorance deserves?

One of two things must be, as history teaches us it has been; either Protestant Pedobaptist churches must be truer to their confessions of faith and alter the constitution of their churches, or they must be truer to the constitution of their churches and put away their confessions of faith. We believe they will choose the first, and will exalt and proclaim and conform to the word of God.

5. *Entrance to the church was not designed to precede the evidence of God's choice.*

There is one more point where an insurmountable difficulty meets the Pedobaptist constitution of a church. They, for the most part, believe, as we also do, that all this scheme of grace, this use of the word of God, this regeneration by the Spirit, this gift of faith, is in consequence of God's gracious choice—his predetermination to bestow salvation upon certain souls. Why he should choose one and pass by another, we can assign no reason, while at the same time we fully believe that there is no unrighteousness with him. The Scriptures assert the fact that he does so elect, and the result in actual experience is in perfect accordance with the statements of

Scripture. This choice, this election, does not interfere in the slightest degree with man's responsibility, or with the perfect freedom and assurance of the gospel call to all. Every man knows he is responsible to God. The sense of direct responsibility to the Supreme Ruler of all is planted so deep in the mind of every human being, that the most degraded Hindoo, or Chinese, or Fetish worshipper of Africa, or the brutalized Australian or Feejee Islander, as well as all the inhabitants of lands called Christian, proclaim it by deed if not by word. Man's, every man's, responsibility to God for all his words and works and thoughts, is asseverated by Scripture just as strongly as God's choice of his people.

It is not for me to enter into a proof of this Scripture doctrine here. It is sufficient for us now that Calvinist and Lutheran, Presbyterian and Independent, the English Church and Dutch Reformed, have all proclaimed their belief in it by their authoritative confessions. The great majority of Baptists have held the same, to wit: that all the means of salvation flow out from God's sovereign, unconditioned, election of his people. Let me quote the excellent statement of Dr. Hodge, in his second volume on Theology, p. 333: "The ground of this election is not

the foresight of anything in the one class (the saved) to distinguish them favorably from the members of the other class (the lost), but the good pleasure of God. . . . That all those whom God has thus chosen to life and for whom Christ specially gave himself in the covenant of redemption, shall certainly (unless they die in infancy) be brought to the knowledge of the truth, to the exercise of faith, and to perseverance in holy living unto the end."

I quote from Dr. Hodge (p. 314, vol. ii.) another statement quite as true as the preceding, which is important just here. "The order of the divine decrees, or in other words the relation in which the several parts of the divine plan stand to each other, is very far from being a matter of idle speculation. It must determine our theology, and our theology determines our religion." We believe that. If, as the Romanist teaches, faith results from good works—if the gift of salvation is bestowed upon us for any good work or any worth in us, then man is not helpless or ruined or lost. If I fall down a precipice and am bruised and broken in some parts, yet able to climb up again and reach a point of safety, I cannot be said to be utterly ruined and lost. If salvation is a rope let down from heaven

which one may catch by a bound into the air—just the strength required both of mind and body to make that bound, measures the good yet remaining in us, and measures too just the amount we are required to supplement to the work of God for our salvation. Christ in that case did not come to save the dead and the lost, but to help man save himself. And the Spirit does not make alive from the dead, but only arouses the drowsy. But if that which is born of the flesh is dead, destitute of all spiritual life to God; if the mind of the flesh, its whole course of thought, runs in the way of and issues in the ocean of death, then every one born again to God by the Spirit, must be so made alive, because God—while the soul was dead—predetermined to make it alive, and also predetermined all the means to that end. This purpose of God's mind, as it stands written broadly on every page of God's word, and in the experience of all who come to him, must, in all right thinking, stand as the antecedent cause of life and faith. In Scripture, to be elect, and to be called of God, are convertible terms. The elect are the called; the called are the elect. On two points the Scriptures warn us. We are not to pry into this eternal counsel of God as though by searching we could

find it out; and we are not to deny the fact, but are to ascribe his work of grace to "his good pleasure which he purposed in himself."

How is this gracious choice made known? By the work of his Spirit in the heart and life of the individual, and we judge of this work by the evidence furnished by the life and profession of the individual. It would seem, then, near akin to monstrous presumption—and nothing but hoary false tradition could ever blind good men to that fact—to lay our hands upon any one and say, this is one of the elect of God, before God has given us any evidence of the fact by the work of his Spirit. Of no one born of flesh can this choice be affirmed till God's work appears in him. He or they who make men believe that they are united to Christ, are members of his body, in any sense, before the work of the Spirit is manifested in faith in them, take their presumptuous stand beside the sovereign, secret will of Jehovah, and profess to declare it, before he has made it known, and by their act profess to bind that free and sovereign will to the sinful work of a lost, dead soul.

To put the church before faith, to put it before the work of the Spirit, to put it before the word, is to attempt to put it in the place of God's sov-

ereign, secret will, and there it breaks upon the bosses of Jehovah's buckler.

The constitution of that church cannot be scriptural which thus wages incessant war, not only with distinct and separate truths of God's word, but (in Dr. Hodge's words) "with the relation in which the several parts of the divine plan stand to each other." This relation, Dr. Hodge says, "determines our theology, and our theology determines our religion."

A CHURCH THE CULMINATING POINT OF GOD'S VISIBLE WORK OF GRACE ON EARTH.

The Baptist holds to the simple Bible truths, that man is born spiritually dead—that life can come, does only come, through the effectual working of the Holy Spirit, and this life is given by God in accordance with his purpose. Joyfully, earnestly, does he carry the gospel call to all, and urge each one to believe in Jesus, assuring each one that if he believes he shall be saved. But before he dares to assure any man that he is a member of Christ or has any part or lot with him, he must see the evidence of the precious work of the Spirit in that man. The assembly of God's people, the church, is the gathering together of those who have thus given credible evidence

of being born again; and so it is the culminating point of God's visible work of grace on earth. The scriptural doctrine of a church does not conflict with, but follows and depends upon and honors, each doctrine and the relation of the doctrines of God's grace to man. A church can be rightly composed only of those who have "received Jesus, and to whom he has given the privilege of becoming the sons of God, who are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

These are the radical differences between the Baptist and Pedobaptist constitutions of a church. Put the ordinances of a church entirely out of view for the moment, and beyond them how wide is the difference between us. What puny superficiality then to assert that the form of one ordinance is all that makes a Baptist church to differ from others, or that Baptists exist merely to uphold that form. If there are any Baptists so blind as to acquiesce in a statement so far short of the truth, I pity them. We are set for the defence, not of one part of the truth only, but of the churches of the living God according to the New Testament model. And not merely for the form of a church, but for that form as it is connected with all the truths of salvation, as well

as for all those truths as they are related to a church.

"The difficulties of Protestant Pedobaptism touching the doctrine of a church" are, that, holding what are usually termed the doctrines of grace, they constitute their churches in indefensible contradiction to these truths.

Our refusal to walk with them in their churches is based not merely upon their change of the form of baptism—for neither historically nor logically is that true. Suppose all Pedobaptist denominations to-day returned to the scriptural form of baptism, but still retained their peculiar constitution as churches, we should be compelled to protest against them and deny that they were formed according to the word of God. Our refusal to walk with them in their churches is not based upon any belief among us that they are not excellent Chistians, taught of the Spirit of God in many ways, zealous in good works, who hold communion with our Lord Jesus Christ, and have a blessed hope of life eternal with him. Let this be stated in its broadest form—let it be proclaimed from the house-tops—let it be known in every Pedobaptist household in the land, that in other things we can bid them God speed, but not in their constitution of churches. Here we

see an error against God's truth, and as we love that truth, we protest in word and life.

God forbid that by this protest we should seem to lay our hands on our hearts and say to Pedobaptists stand off, we are holier than you! Paul had no such feeling when he withstood Peter to the face because he was to be blamed. It was in the interest of that truth which was dearer and more precious and vital than all earthly ties, and I do not believe many pious Baptists live who have any pleasure in this protest for itself; but as they have been saved by Jesus and taught his truth, they must uphold that, whatever opposes. Nor can those now antagonistic, be one in churches till all churches are by their constitution brought into entire harmony with that truth. God grant that day may soon come.

Brethren, these facts are burdened with lessons for us. If we have more truth on our side, by that we are placed under a mightier responsibility—a responsibility not answered by a mere blatant protest, but demanding of us lives wholly consecrated to God. The worldly Baptist has no excuse, and so far as we can judge will be worthy of a deeper condemnation than those who have not seen God's truth so clearly. Our

churches must proclaim their protest against error much more by the lives of the members than by mere assertion, or the assertion of the error of others will be their own condemnation. Our churches must be pure in doctrine—living in faith—strict in discipline, if they are to be true witnesses for our God and his Christ.

THE END.

POPULAR OBJECTIONS

TO

BAPTIST PRINCIPLES

AND

PRACTICES.

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POPULAR OBJECTIONS

TO

BAPTIST PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES.

ALLOW me to say at the outset, that I do not intend to assail or denounce Christians of any name or sect. What I have to say will be simply explanatory and defensive. I purpose only a vindication of Baptists against censures which I think unfair and unjust.

All Christians of catholic and generous spirit will, I am sure, rejoice if I shall be able to show that, as churches of Christ, we are not unworthy the confidence and love of those who, though differing from us in some points, yet hold with us the same essential evangelical Christianity,

and believe in one common Redeemer. If any have received unfavorable impressions concerning our doctrines or spirit, we trust it will be a satisfaction and pleasure to them to have such disagreeable impressions removed. To a pious heart it must be grateful to correct a misjudgment, and to discover reasons for regarding kindly any persons against whom wrongful prepossessions have been inadvertently entertained. Confidence is pleasanter than distrust. To love is sweeter than to hate.

I most heartily endorse in their entire tone and spirit the catholic utterances of Dr. Carson, found in the preface of his book on Baptism. He says: "Nothing can be farther from [my] intention than to widen the breach between churches of different denominations, or to minister to the increase of a sectarian spirit. There are two extremes which I wish to avoid—on the one hand, a spirit of liberalism that supposes the Christian his own master, and hesitates not to sacrifice the commandments of God to the courtesies of religious intercourse; on the other,

that sort of dogmatism that finds all excellence in its own party, and is reluctant to acknowledge the people of the Lord in any denomination but its own. Liberality of sentiment is not a phrase which I admit into my religious vocabulary; for though I love and acknowledge all who love the Lord Jesus, I hold myself as much under the law of God in embracing all the children of God, as in forming the articles of my creed. My recognition of all Christians I found upon the authority of Jesus. To set at nought the weakest of Christ's little ones, I call, not illiberal—but unchristian. To disown those whom Christ acknowledges, is anti-christian disobedience to Christ."

Wherever I perceive the image of Jesus reflected from the life and spirit of any professed disciple, though all his views of truth may not be clear, or not in chime with mine—though on some points he may be weak in the faith—still I will receive him, not to doubtful disputation, but as a brother beloved in the Lord.

It were better for me to have a millstone

hanged about my neck, and to be plunged with it into the midst of the sea, than wilfully to offend one of Christ's little ones. I would not, from lack of charity, "become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal."

A broad generalization will include most of the popular objections made against Baptists in this one—they are a BIGOTED, ILLIBERAL, EXCLUSIVE SECT.

If any one should ask for proof that such an impression does prevail as a popular objection, it would not be difficult to furnish it. It has not needed much reading or listening to collate a catalogue of such sweet and brotherly adjectives and phrases as these: "Intolerant—narrow—prejudiced—uncharitable—dogmatical—biased—warped and twisted—tenacious of trifles—blinded by a single idea—tied to a hobby—obstinate in maintaining one-sided views—assuming—clannish—shallow and obtuse—wrong headed—notional—crotchety—self opinionated—incapable of discovering any good outside their own communion—bigots for insisting that only one mode

of baptism is known to the Scriptures—cruelly excluding little children from their church—rudely and offensively aggressive—displaying all the assumption, all the exclusiveness of the Puseyite faction, without its learning or good breeding."

Have you not heard or read loving epithets and pet phrases of this sort, mercilessly flung at the Baptists, from pulpit and rostrum, from the professor's chair and the editor's sanctum, in sermons, tracts, pamphlets, handbills, books, newspaper paragraphs and leaders, in conversations and controversies in the street and field and shop and parlor?

I do not over-color this picture. Taunts sneers, sarcasms, have been reiterated and rung through all possible changes, until a sort of general public sentiment prevails, that if one is a Baptist, he must be almost necessarily illiberal, exclusive, dogmatical, and clannish. Surely if we are not liberalized, no blame can attach to our more catholic and charitable brethren for failing to tell us our faults.

Now I have no defence or apology to offer for

the illiberality and exclusiveness of the Baptists. I simply and solemnly deny the allegation altogether. I join issue upon the facts in the case. In the name of the denomination I plead not guilty to the charge. I challenge the production of any proofs to sustain it.

In broad views of Christian obligation and duty; in generous sympathies with all that is true and good; in far-reaching charities; in large plans and methods of evangelical work; in promptness and cheerfulness of co-operation in all forms of benevolence, with all who love man and love God, Baptist communities have no cause to dread comparison with any religious societies that do now exist, or ever have existed on this globe. Their catholicity and charity are cramped within no narrower limits than the broad boundaries of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

I do not assert that individual Baptists may not be found who are bigoted, narrow, and intolerant. All churches unfortunately have such members. Men of extreme and narrow

notions may be found in every sect and society—men who cannot comprehend that there may be two sides to any question, whose mental optics are quite filled by any single angle that juts into the field of vision. There are minds incapable of taking broad and comprehensive views—short-sighted minds, we may say. They see one thing and are sure of that, but they cannot discern its relations to other things. They see one side of a shield, and it is brass. They cannot conceive that it may be silver on the other side. Two such, disputing from opposite sides, will contend even to fighting—the one that the shield is all brass, the other that it is all silver. Could they only change positions for a moment, they would discover that both were partly right, and yet both wholly wrong.

No society in its principles and spirit as a whole, is to be judged by the notions and crotchets of extremists—by the shallow conceptions of sciolists or pedants—by the partial and prejudiced vagaries of enthusiasts, who think

weakly and feel strongly. No fair judgment can be formed by the study of such representatives. If only such communities as are happily free from all adherents of this character are permitted to cast stones at us, we shall not be stoned to death, shortly.

"The Baptists are a clannish, selfish, exclusive, intolerant sect!"

This, with variations, is virtually the one objection urged against us.

A charge so wide in its scope, so general in its application, so indefinite in its character, requires a wide and general answer.

I. My first answer is: THAT BAPTISTS FOR MORE THAN THREE HUNDRED YEARS HAVE BEEN THE ADVOCATES OF UNIVERSAL RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

The history of the doctrine of religious freedom is very interesting and instructive. Three hundred years ago, it was not recognized by any civil government, nor by any organized church in the world. The Roman Catholic Church has never yet admitted the idea by any

deliverance in creed, confession, canon, or decree. The doctrine that the conscience is free, not to be regulated or forced by human legislation, has always been denounced as a blasphemous heresy by the authorities of the Papal Church.

The Reformers all held similar views. They adopted the theory and brought it into universal and oppressive practice, that the state ought to legislate for the church, and prescribe by statute the religious creed and ceremonial for the people. The Greek, Lutheran, Reformed, Presbyterian, Congregational, Episcopalian, and every other church organized previous to the eighteenth century, were organized and governed with this as a recognized and enforced principle, that state governments ought to support and regulate the church, and enact and exact penalties against all who disbelieved the state creed or neglected the state ritual. This was the universal teaching of statesmen and clergy. It is to this day, though with somewhat modified phases, in every country on the globe but this.

But some three hundred years ago, a new, a

revolutionary idea, struggled up into utterance, and was cast out into the current of the world's thought. A few men timorously whispered, "Conscience should be free. Men will love each other better, if each is permitted to worship God in his own way. Let every man be subject to civil government in all civil matters, but let every one choose his own faith and forms of worship."

The idea found no welcome from princes or clergy. Religious liberty was hooted as a monstrosity, scoffed at as an absurdity, denounced as a dangerous fanaticism, and those who whispered the word were imprisoned, tortured, strangled, and burned. Yet it was a generous, liberal, benevolent, God-inspired idea. The people who originated and pleaded for this doctrine deserve well of the world. It was the expression of a charity—a wide-reaching liberality—a boundless love for humanity—an extension of equal immunities to all mankind—which no other single doctrine could convey.

Now who were the people who announced, de-

fended, pleaded for, the spiritual rights and liberties of all men everywhere? Why, these same narrow, exclusive, illiberal Baptists! The earnest pleadings for universal charity issued from the lips and hearts of Baptists. When Rome, in her terrible domination, was crushing every man and every sect, that dared even to question her authority or the divinity of her absurdest doctrines, these men sent wailing protests against this barbarous intolerance from dungeons and scaffolds. When dying from torture, they begged that the freedom wherewith Christ maketh free might be granted to all men; that all obedient citizens, though Turks or Jews or Pagans, might enjoy liberty of faith and worship.

When the morning of the Reformation dawned, and its stoutest and purest champions transferred to their own creed the article that recognized the right and duty of civil government to coerce conscience and punish dissenters from the newly-established religion, still these Baptists were pleaders for the spiritual rights of

all men. Luther scouted their doctrines, and in so doing checked the Reformation in mid-career. Had Baptists then been listened to, the Reformation would have swept all Europe. Its own intolerance arrested its progress and broke down its influence. All the leading Reformers repudiated these teachings of Christian love. Zwingle, Melancthon, and Calvin, on the continent; Cranmer, Latimer, and Knox, in England, all refused fellowship to any who differed with them about a syllable in the creed, or the version of a Psalm, or the fashion of a surplice, or the shape of a cap. Such differences provoked denunciation, and the denounced were persecuted and punished wherever bigotry could control legislation. Freedom of conscience—that fundamental, underlying principle of forbearance and fellowship and brotherly love—was not accepted nor comprehended by any of the leaders of the Reformed churches. It found expression and defence nowhere on this earth but in those persecuted, scattered communities—Baptist churches.

On this whole subject, Baptists can exhibit a glorious record. In continuous series, their catholic pleas for universal charity and liberty for all men have been traced, year by year, from 1520, when Luther was yet struggling to free his soul from the trammels of Romanism; before Zwingle had renounced allegiance to the Pope; before Calvin had laid the foundation of Presbyterianism; long before Henry VIII. and Cranmer had planted the seeds of Episcopalianism—from 1520 in Germany, to 1784 in Virginia, there is no link wanting in their chain of testimonies, there is no contradictory utterance in all their deliverances.

The first published confession of faith in all the ages, asserting the right of all men to religious liberty, was published by a convention of Baptists, in England, in 1611. The earliest and, for generations, the only writers claiming and defending spiritual freedom were Baptists.

These doctrines of the Baptists have liberalized all the sects. They have infused a sweeter Christian charity into the creeds and spirit of all the

churches. Not what Luther and Zwingle taught on this subject, but what Hubmeyer and Felix Mantz, those martyred Baptists of the sixteenth century, taught, is now received by Lutherans as the truth of God. Not the narrow notions of Calvin and Knox, but the generous sentiments of Busher and Helwys are now adopted by the Presbyterians. Not the exclusive and bigoted vagaries of Cranmer and Latimer, but the catholic creed of Henry Hart and Humphrey Middleton—burned at Canterbury, in 1555—are now the standards of Episcopalianism, at least in this country. Congregationalism in New England has been liberalized, by repudiating John Cotton's bloody tenets, and accepting Roger Williams' conclusions of "Truth and Peace." Not the church parsons of Virginia, but the Wallers and Webbers and Irelands, who from jail windows proclaimed universal toleration and good-will, gave direction and tone to the charitable sentiments now so popular and amiable in all the churches. As a religious denomination, the Baptists have been the most liberal and catholic in the world.

They have contended for the liberties of Romanists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Quakers, Jews, Turks, and Pagans, as earnestly as for their own.

And yet, forsooth, in these modern days, it has been discovered and proclaimed, that Baptists are an illiberal, exclusive, narrow sect! The Baptists exclusive! when the foundation principle of their whole church polity is the essentiality of voluntary choice to right membership in the church of Christ? Exclusive! when every chapter in our history furnishes a brilliant record of struggles for soul liberty, in which all others equally with ourselves should be sharers? Exclusive! when we never struck a blow at the shackles that galled our own limbs, that did not fall with equal force upon the fetters that bound others? Exclusive! then the sunshine and the showers, that fall impartially upon all alike, are exclusive.

II. In their social relations and qualities, I have never observed that the Baptists exhibit any peculiar exclusiveness or moroseness.

They seem to me, in these respects, equal to the average of humanity.

In our cities and towns, and in some rural districts too, we often find cliques and coteries. Various affinities draw parties together in social sets. Family, blood, culture, fashion, church, are centres around which little parties segregate themselves. Outsiders may complain of these cliques; some who would like to belong to them, or be recognized by them, may murmur and sneer. It is often a relief to grumble. I have no theory for reforming or reconstructing society in these respects. I leave philosophising about it to the social reformers.

But it is pertinent to ask: Are Baptists peculiarly chargeable with this social exclusiveness? The question answers itself. Their illiberalism does not take that direction.

Suppose I should ask you to judge from ordinary observation, which of the religious denominations are most repellant of others in social intercourse, which knit themselves most closely together in clanship, which most obvi-

ously separate themselves into little "touch me not" coteries, forming "our set," "moving in a different sphere;" well, I am sure you would not answer, "The Baptists." "Oh, no!" I have often heard the sneer, "*they* are not in the higher classes. They are, in the main, composed of common people."

Well, there is a comfort in calling to mind that the "common people heard Jesus gladly," and that he (blessed be his name!) and his apostles and primitive disciples, all belonged, not to the higher classes—the aristocracy of Pharisees and nobles—but to the lower mass, such as carpenters and fishermen, tax-gatherers and publicans, "the poor of this world, rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom." You may say this of us, but you cannot then add, "and these people, too, are social exclusives. These plebeians arrogate social superiority over the patricians, and the patricians are grieved about it. This rude democracy is hurting the feelings of the refined aristocracy by declining proffered fraternity and fellowship." This would be a marvellous rever-

sal of the order of society in this world of ours. We modestly claim that in all ordinary intercourse, our people are as hospitable and generous, as easy of approach, as cheerful in neighborly charities, as prompt in kindly responses to all proffers of good-fellowship, as the average of mankind.

Bear with me while I utter a few serious words more on this topic. As I conceive, it is neither good philosophy, patriotism, nor piety, for the cultivated and rich to separate themselves from association with the humbler classes, especially in church relations. Their advantages involve duties toward those less favored, which cannot be met by isolating themselves in dissevered communions. The educated and wealthy have no moral right to withdraw themselves from the ignorant and poor, into their class churches, and to consult mere taste and social affinities instead of conscience and benevolence. Instead of shunning the rude and the lowly, in religious association, the true-hearted Christian will rather seek to link himself in fellowship with the humble poor,

come nearer to them that he may do them good, and aid in their elevation and purity with his influence and culture and means. As Jesus himself preferred to come into closest affiliation with the poor and ignorant, in order to reach and raise them, so should all his true followers seek to do. Those disciples who piously aim to imitate this sublime example are most blessed of heaven, and most useful to men. Your class churches, in which wealth and fashion and taste, and parvenue travesties of them, withdraw from common humanity, are far from the model which Jesus gave, and after which the apostles patterned. These, if any on earth, are your real close communion churches. When Baptist churches cherish such exclusiveness, may they be obliterated, and more Christ-like communities be raised up in their places.

III. It can hardly be fairly objected to us, that we are exclusive and narrow in our plans and endeavors to EDUCATE AND ELEVATE THE PEOPLE.

It is true we have our own schools and colleges,

but so have all other sects; and the doors of ours are as widely open as any. There is as little sectarian restriction and teaching in them as in any, and that, I think, is stating the case very moderately. We are trying to take a generous share in this great common work.

Our children are educated in the schools of other sects more numerously, I think, than their children in ours. We have some reason to complain of our own people for too large a liberality in this matter. Our own schools suffer from it. Not a few of our ministers have been trained in Presbyterian colleges and theological schools. Rarely does a class pass from the halls of Princeton without numbering Baptists among its graduates. Few are the colleges and universities in the land which do not number our children in their classes. Should one reply, "That is because these institutions are regarded as the best," then our answer would be, if admitting it: "Is it not a proof of a catholic and liberal spirit to choose the best, regardless of sectarian proclivities?" Our state universities, supposed to be without

sectarian bias, have a large share of representatives from Baptist churches, except in the departments of instruction and control.

Is this generous spirit equally reciprocated? Allow me just to state a few facts illustrating this point.

In 1720, Thomas Hollis of London, a Baptist —whom Backus calls "one of the most liberal men on earth"—endowed a professorship of theology in Harvard College, then a strictly sectarian Congregational institution. This gift has ever since yielded eighty pounds sterling a year. No Baptist ever filled that chair. A Unitarian holds it now. Hollis also endowed ten scholarships, each yielding one hundred dollars per annum, and only providing that four of them should be appropriated to Baptist students, if such applied. Where are the professorships and scholarships in our institutions endowed by Christians of other churches? Six years after, in 1726, he endowed another professorship—that of mathematics and experimental philosophy—with a salary of four hundred dollars a year. He gave an apparatus

costing one hundred and fifty pounds sterling, and large additions to the college library. He was the most munificent benefactor of the college in his day; and all this was done, while the ecclesiastical authorities controlling the college were fining, whipping, imprisoning, and banishing the Baptists, and nailing up the doors of their churches. Does the world furnish an illustration of liberality toward us that will compare with this? Two years after this last generous donation, by the very people who accepted it, twenty-eight Baptists, two Episcopalians, and two Quakers were imprisoned in Bristol jail for failing to pay taxes for the support of Congregational ministers.

Take another illustration. In 1828, Ebenezer Lane, a Baptist, gave four thousand dollars as a foundation for a theological seminary in Cincinnati, which yet bears his name—the Lane Seminary—and he gave it to the Presbyterians. Where is the Baptist institution that bears the name of a Presbyterian founder? Later still, in 1870, Judge Fletcher of Boston, a Baptist, be-

queathed one hundred thousand dollars to Dartmouth College, a Congregational institution. When may we expect one hundred thousand, or a single thousand dollars, from a member of any other church for one of our institutions, even as a memorial of the noble men who won religious freedom for all sects?

With such facts gemming the pages of our history, is it generous or just to stigmatize us as an illiberal and exclusive sect, without broad sympathies or a catholic spirit? Such charges have been so persistently repeated that some people without investigation have come to believe that there must be some truth in them. I am sure that good men will be glad to learn that there are no fair reasons for such a prejudice.

IV. In those wider charities that stretch away from self and home, and, like God's love for a world so distant as this from his heaven, seek to instruct and save the ignorant and guilty who can never make any returns—in the grand MISSIONARY EVANGELISM of the church, have Baptists been narrow and selfish?

Leading the grand movement of modern missions, the first society for evangelizing the heathen was organized by Baptists, in 1793. The pioneer missionary was William Carey. Among the leaders of American missions, were Adoniram Judson and Luther Rice. The first translations of the Bible into heathen tongues were made by Baptists. They have published God's book, in native languages, to more than two-thirds of the population of the globe. The first Bible Society for distributing the Holy Scriptures was planned, nourished into vigorous life, and made successful and efficient by the energies of Wm. Hughes, a Baptist. The first Christian churches organized of heathen converts in India, Burmah, China, Siam, were Baptist churches.

We would detract nothing from the honor due to other churches for the generous part they have taken in these noble enterprises. With larger wealth, and more concentrated organization, they have often done more than we have in contributing to the efficiency of these great movements. But it will not be denied that into

these broad fields of Christian enterprise, the Baptists were leaders.

In all the general societies, too, in which Christians of different denominations have combined to promote a common work—as in Bible, Tract, Sunday School, Temperance, and other Societies, our people have been interested workers. From what common charities have we withheld our co-operation? We do not deny that there has been a class of Baptists, known as "Anti-Missionary, or Old School," who have refused co-operation in these charities. But their numbers were always small, and their leaders without influence in the councils of the denomination, and the great body have pressed onward uninfluenced by their antagonism.

If we have our own denominational societies for various kinds of Christian work, so have all other sects. It is perhaps best for the general good that it should be so. But it seems scarcely fair, that our brethren from behind their own party hedges should taunt us for not marching all our forces out upon the broad common.

So far, then, I think that all unbi ed minds will admit that Baptists, as a whole, are about as liberal and catholic as any other people.

I hear that murmur! "Ah, this is very well, very good points to make but, after all, there is your CLOSE COMMUNION."

Is that all? Do all the objections to us, as churches, virtually centre in this? Let us, then, examine a little this phantom that scares so many people, ycleped

Close Communion.

I deny this charge, too. I, for one, am *no* close communionist. I repudiate the phrase, and the idea which it ordinarily conveys.

What is Communion?

The lexicons say Communion is "fellowship; intercourse between two or more persons; interchange of transactions and offices; agreement; concord." In a religious sense, the philologists define it: "Mutual intercourse or union in religious worship, or in doctrines, or in discipline."

(Webster.) In distinguishing it from "conversation," Crabbe says, "Communion may take place without corporeal agency; conversation never does." The Greek word κοινωνία, which we sometimes translate communion, occurs in just twenty different places in the New Testament; in twelve, translated "fellowship;" in one, "distribution;" in one, "contribution;" in four, "communion;" and in only two of all, and both in the same passage, is it used with any reference to the Lord's Supper.

The word Communion, in its proper signification in New Testament usage, is equivalent to agreement, fellowship. So far as I agree with another, I commune with him in the expression of that agreement. As Christians, so far as we believe the same truths, experience like emotions, and cooperate in common charities, we do commune together. When I join voice and heart with a brother in a hymn of praise to God, or in a prayer, in which our spirits are in unison, I am in communion with him. When I listen to a sermon, and believe, and love, and am edified

and refreshed by its truths, my spirit is in communion with the spirit of the preacher.

If I join with any brother in any work of charity, ministering to the sick or the sorrowing, the poor or the ignorant, in which both our hearts are interested, I am in communion with him.

This is Christian communion— agreement in faith, in feeling, and in labor; mutual participation in the same duties, emotions, and experiences. And so far as this agreement goes, does the communion extend. Further it cannot go. Where we do not agree it is impossible to commune. There can no more be communion in differences, than agreement in disagreements, or harmony in discords. Communion in differences is a contradiction of terms. Any forms or expressions of communion where there is not union in sentiment and affection, are, whether consciously or not, hollow and hypocritical.

I can commune with a Quaker, a Unitarian, or an Atheist, so far as we agree, but no farther. I commune more closely with a devout Presbyterian, Methodist, or Episcopalian, because we hold more truths, and more important truths, in

common. We walk further together on a common platform. But just where the disagreement begins the communion ends; not because he wishes, or I wish it to end, but necessarily, because there is a point upon which we no longer think or feel alike. We may love each other tenderly, have faith in the conscientious honesty of each other's convictions, but communion, that is, agreement, in differences, is simply an absurd impossibility.

This, then, is Christian communion—to believe alike, feel alike, work alike, and in harmony with each other.

Now, in this broad, true, literal meaning of the word Communion, *are* Baptists close communionists? I deny it emphatically. We do hold communion with all Christians just so far as we have common faith, experience, worship, and duty. So far as these go, Baptists have always sought a common participation and fellowship.

And when my heart is linked to your heart in all pious experiences, and my hand is joined in your hand in all godly activities; when I go with you to the full length of our mutual agree-

ment, will you reproach me with close communion? Will you first put an unauthorized, technical, narrow meaning into the word communion, and then apply it invidiously to me? You are uncharitable and unjust to me in uttering such reproach. Could you say to me, "I will commune with you in what I deem your errors and faults?" You would be untrue to yourself and your faith to say so. You could not do it if you tried. We do not ask it of you.

We sincerely say, then, let us walk together in sweet communion of spirit and labor, so far as we are agreed, and beyond that let there be mutual forbearance and charity. We shall not win each other into closer mutual communion by harsh epithets and words of strife.

Up to this point, then, will you not admit that we are not deserving of any peculiar censure? In our ordinary intercourse with Christian people of all names, are we not about as kind and frank and hearty as any? In all interchanges of Christian courtesy; in pious counsels, and labors, and worship; in boards, committees, and

trusteeships; in Christian Associations and benevolent societies; in conversing, singing, praying, worshipping, and toiling together; in fraternal and ministerial recognitions and exchanges; in all common objects in regard to which there is a common agreement, is there any peculiar closeness or exclusiveness among Baptists? Do those denominations holding what they are pleased to term open communion, mingle and cooperate more freely and lovingly with each other than Baptists do with all? I might push these questions farther, but I forbear.

But some of you may be thinking the *main* objection is not *yet* touched. It is this. You will not invite us, for whom you profess such communion, to participate with you in the LORD'S SUPPER. Here, then, we have the charge narrowed down to a single topic. There seems absolutely nothing else in regard to which Baptists exhibit any especial closeness. We ask, we claim this admission, that, in all other respects save this *one*, Baptists are as liberal, amicable, charitable, and catholic as any other people.

"You refuse us recognition and fellowship by declining to partake with us the Supper of the Lord." This is the single serious objection to our principles and practices. Is it not?

My first answer to this is, that the Lord's Supper was not instituted or intended to express the fellowship or love of Christians for one another. In any controversy it is very important rightly to define the words that are employed. *Do* Christians come to the Lord's table to *commune* with each other? Is taking the Lord's Supper a communion of the saints? Is this a ceremony intended to express, as Christians, mutual remembrance, fellowship, and affection for one another? Emphatically, No! The notion that Christians go to the Lord's table for such purpose, is a bald fallacy. It has no warrant in God's word, nor in the spiritual intent and experience of the Lord's disciples. The Lord's Supper is not, according to its institution or nature, an ordinance expressive of mutual commu nion or fellowship.

When Jesus instituted this ordinance, he ut

tered not one word indicating that he meant it as a test of mutual fellowship, or an observance in which Christians might show their love for one another. He said, "This do in remembrance" —not of each other—but "of me." "As oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show forth"—*what?* Communion with one another? No, verily!—"the Lord's death." To his disciples "the Lord was made known in the breaking of bread." After they were baptized, we are told, "they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in breaking of bread, and in prayers." Here the breaking of bread was not the fellowship, but something distinguished from it as clearly as the doctrine and the prayers. The fellowship is one thing; the breaking of bread is another and different thing. "The cup which we bless, is it not the communion of"—what? Of Christians with one another? No—"the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" This is the only passage in which the word communion occurs at all in con

nection with the Lord's Supper. Communion of the blood and body of Christ is communion with Christ in the sufferings and death of which the cup and the loaf are the expressive symbols.

This, then, is the design of the Lord's Supper, "to show his death"—"to do this in remembrance of him."

And that this is its purpose the *experience* of all spiritually minded Christians corroborates. When you piously partake of the Lord's Supper is your brother in your thought and heart, or is your Lord? Are you meditating on *their* excellences, or on *his* sufferings? Is it esteem for them, or love for him that you cherish? If the heart is in harmony with the solemn service, it is full of Christ, not of Christians. We forget, or strive to forget, feel it duty to forget, the dearest friend of earth, though sitting beside us, and concentrate our thoughts and love on Jesus. Should a brother lean toward you to assure you of his love and fellowship while the bread was in your hand, or the cup at your lip, you would shrink from him as expressing a sentiment utterly out

of place and season. You are abstracting yourself from all earthly relations and friendships and loves, and concentrating thought and feeling and memory upon Jesus and his sufferings and death for you. You do not come to that table to commune with your brother, but to commune with your Redeemer alone. "This do in remembrance of me." "Ye do show the Lord's death."

Is this view of the essential design of the Lord's Supper and of Christian experience in partaking of it true? Then it follows, that if I wish to commune with a Christian, I must go away from the Lord's table to do it. I do not show my love or my fellowship for him there. That is not the place for interchanges of mutual affection. If any disciple, then, asks me to commune with him, I answer, certainly; we will pray together, praise together, talk of the Lord's goodness and grace, rehearse our experiences of his mercy and love, and labor together in all measures to edify Christians and to win souls to Jesus. This is communion!

Are Baptists then close communionists? What

other Christians are more ready than they thus to commune with their brethren?

If that disciple says to me further, "Let us express our communion with one another by sitting together at the supper of the Lord," I will answer, "My brother, to that table I go to commune with my Saviour, not with you or any mortal man or holy angel. If you go there in a right spirit you will forget me, as I shall certainly strive to forget you. There our thoughts and hearts are to be so full of Christ as to leave no room for memories of one another. I have nothing to do with man at the table of the Lord. My intercourse and fellowship there are solely with Jesus."

Does not this view prove, then, that Christian communion and fellowship does not at all depend upon mutual participation of the Lord's Supper? There is Christian communion without it; and there is strictly nothing of what is popularly called communion in it. Whatever is essential to the communion of the saints is to be sought for elsewhere than at the supper of the

Lord, and if not found elsewhere, will not be found there.

Now, I may be asked, "If then there is no Christian intercommunion in a mutual participation of the Lord's Supper, why not invite us to partake with you?"

I answer, We have no right to change the terms or conditions which our Lord has established in relation to this ordinance. We decline to legislate for Christ's church. If he requires that his disciples shall first be baptized, and thus be initiated into his church, and *then* partake of the supper, we are not warranted in changing or consenting to a change of this order.

Certainly *some* qualifications or conditions are prerequisite to a right approach to the Lord's Supper. Surely it is not a feast to be thrown open indiscriminately to all comers. Ministers may not fling out invitations to this solemn festival as freely as merrymakers to a picnic, or politicians to a barbecue. Christian liberality does not require this; Christian reverence and integrity do not permit us to go thus far.

This is a subject in regard to which we are to inquire, not what is popular or expedient, but simply and only what is the law of Christ? What does Jesus, our only lawgiver, require as qualifications and conditions? Ten thousand sophistries are swept away by simple adherence to a sound principle. If we are close, it is only because we wish to be close to Christ's commands. We will strain after no liberty or liberality beyond the bounds which our Master and Redeemer has fixed.

What, then, according to the gospel, ought the Christian to be and to do in order to come rightly to the supper of the Lord?

I answer: first, converted; second, baptized.

Our Lord's final and definite instructions to his apostles, and through them to his church in all ages, are these: "Go ye therefore and teach (disciple) all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." This commission involves the whole method of Christian

organization and order. The plain order, then, is for the minister, first, to disciple—that is, so to present the claims and motives of the gospel as to win souls to Christ; for thus only can they be discipled—second, to baptize those thus taught or discipled; third, to instruct them to observe whatsoever Christ has commanded. The order for those addressed by Christ's ministers is: first, to become disciples; second, to be baptized; third, to observe whatsoever Christ has commanded. Is it possible to convey in human language instructions plainer than these?

Now, where in this distinct line of sequences comes in the Lord's Supper? Before the discipleship? Before baptism? Who dare thus interchange the order which Jesus has prescribed, and affirm that the baptism may come before the discipleship, or the Lord's Supper before the baptism? Who will venture to use his shallow wisdom to amend the order which our Lord has appointed?

We find further that this divinely instituted order was strictly observed by the apostles.

Their practice, guided by inspiration, is a commentary upon this commission of the Lord.

Upon the day of Pentecost they, first, taught, or discipled, the people; second, they baptized them; third, the baptized "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread (the Lord's Supper), and in prayer." Philip preached in Samaria. The people first believed, were discipled; second, were baptized; afterward the supper of the Lord. There is no instance given in the New Testament intimating that any unbaptized disciple ever took into his hands or lips the bread and wine of this ordinance. All the examples adduced or alluded to show that those who partook of the supper of the Lord were the converted and baptized. The practice of the apostles and primitive disciples agrees with the commission of Christ.

It must from the necessities of the case be so. Baptism is made, by the law of the Lord, the ordinance or ceremony which initiates the disciple into the church, or congregation of believers. The Lord's Supper is administered within the

church to the congregation of believers. The initiatory rite, as a matter of course, necessarily precedes the rights and privileges of membership in the body. Permit me to illustrate this principle. A foreigner cannot become a citizen in this country without a formal oath of allegiance. He may have all the moral and intellectual qualifications that are necessary to citizenship. He may be better fitted to enjoy the privileges and perform the duties of citizenship than many recognized citizens, but the privileges peculiar to the citizen he cannot enjoy till he has taken that oath of allegiance prescribed by the statute. Nor can he come in by any other oath than that.

Now, by the law of the Lord, baptism stands in relation to his organized kingdom as the oath of allegiance stands in relation to citizenship to the civil government. You cannot come into Christ's church except by baptism. You cannot become a member of any society without submitting to the prescribed initiatory ceremony or condition, and you cannot claim any of the privileges peculiar to membership in the society

until you thus become a member of it. So plainly is this order the teaching of the Scriptures in relation to the church; so obvious is it in the very nature of the case, that the articles and canons of all Christian sects in all ages teach or take for granted, that whoever comes rightly to the table of the Lord has been previously baptized. Until a comparatively recent date this position has never been questioned. And it is worthy of remark in passing, that the theory which denies that baptism is a necessary prerequisite to the Lord's Supper originated with Baptists. John Bunyan's "Water Baptism no bar to Communion" is the first treatise I have ever heard of on that side of the question. At a later date Robert Hall and Baptist Noel and others have taken this ground.

Will you ponder this fact as it bears on the charge of Baptist intolerance, narrowness, and exclusiveness? Here has been a struggle in the hearts of Baptists to work out some method by which to break down the barriers that separate the denominations. The great heart of John Bun-

yan, uncramped by his thirteen years of imprisonment in Bedford jail, beat so lovingly for all the disciples of Jesus that he even strained the truth itself to get into closer union with them. And Hall and Noel and others seemed restless even under the appearance of division. They dared not give up their views of baptism. To them it was immersion and nothing else. But they said, "We think we may sit with you at the Lord's table though you have not been baptized." They tried to make even the word of God bend to their desire for a closer, an ecclesiastical as well as a moral, union with Christians of other names. Does this look like intolerance and exclusiveness? Where has a spirit like this been reciprocated? For example, most of our brethren hold that immersion and sprinkling are equally baptism. They could, therefore, give up sprinkling without sacrificing conscience or truth. We could all then unite upon "one baptism." A spirit of liberality, of solicitude for church union, anything like that manifested by Bunyan and Hall, would prompt brethren who long for union to say,

"As *we* do acknowledge immersion to be a true baptism, and as you cannot conscientiously recognize the validity of sprinkling, we will adopt the one mode upon which we can all agree, and in this respect at least we shall be one." This would be coming a little part of the way to meet the advances of the Baptists.

A few years since a bishop of the Episcopal Church did publicly propose a compromise with the Baptists somewhat of this sort, urging the restoration of the primitive immersion into the Episcopal Church of this country from the clergy of the Greek Church. But his brethren would not listen to this wise and truthful counsel, and chose to perpetuate what that bishop called an irregular baptism, but what we conscientiously believe to be no baptism at all.

Now we ask in all candor, if the liberal, the catholic position on these points has not been taken and held by Baptists? A charitable response to the loving spirit of such men as Bunyan and Hall would have effected this union ages ago. I adduce these considerations that

you may judge upon which side of this controversy there is, after all that has been said, the largest liberality and charity.

To return to the directer line of argument. I have shown the clear teaching of the New Testament, and it is the received doctrine of all the creeds of Christendom, that baptism goes before the Lord's Supper, that every Christian should be baptized before coming to the Lord's table.

Within fifty years of the last apostle's death, Justin Martyr said, speaking of the Lord's Supper, "of which it is not lawful for any to partake but such as believe the things taught by us to be true, and have been baptized." Dr. Wall, the learned Episcopalian historian, who profoundly investigated this whole subject, declares, "No church ever gave the communion to any persons before they were baptized. Among all the absurdities that ever were held, none ever maintained *that*, that any person should partake of the communion before he was baptized."

We thus prove our position, that conversion and baptism must precede the Lord's Supper:

1. From the explicit commission of our Lord.

2. From the practice of the apostolic churches.

3. From the very nature of the relation of baptism to membership, and of membership to the Lord's Supper.

4. From the universal practice, and from the creeds of all churches in all ages.

Here then we stand on one common platform as interpreted by their confessions, with all Christian sects. We would go far to secure ecclesiastical union with all who love Christ, but we cannot disregard a law of Jesus. That law is, conversion before baptism, baptism before the Lord's Supper.

The single point upon which we are close, the single question by which the issue is to be decided is—What is baptism? We do hold that an immersion, a burial in water, is essential to baptism, and that those who have not been buried in baptism have not been baptized. It is thus a close baptism that we hold, not a close communion. With strict uncompromising convictions as to what constitutes baptism, we are

willing to be charged; we will not shrink from that reproach; we will rather glory in it; but we insist that it is unfair and invidious to stigmatize us as close communionists when the principles we hold on this subject are common to all denominations.

The whole and sole question, then, between us and other evangelical churches, so far as the ordinances are concerned, is this—What is baptism? This question I do not of course propose to discuss now. We are convinced that when Jesus commanded us to be baptized he meant that we should be immersed in water, and that nothing else than this is baptism at all. To us our brethren of other churches are beloved Christians, but they are unbaptized Christians, and we hold that they ought to be baptized before coming to the Lord's table.

"It is the Lord's table!" Yes! And therefore the invitations to it are to be governed by the Lord's instructions. To our own tables we may invite whom we will. But servants may not give out invitations to their Master's table,

except according to their Master's instructions.

With a brief summary of arguments presented I conclude.

1. I have shown (I hope to your satisfaction and gratification) that in all social intercourse, benevolent co-operation, true Christian fellowship and communion, the Baptists, as a denomination, are not fairly chargeable with bigotry, exclusiveness, or narrowness; but are liberal, charitable, and catholic.

2. That the word communion, in scriptural usage, has a very broad application, but is not at all used to denote mutual fellowship at the Lord's table, and that to limit the word "communion" to the Lord's Supper, and then couple the word "close" with it, is an abuse of language, a fallacy unwarranted and invidious.

3. That the Lord's Supper is an ordinance in which we are to remember Jesus, show forth his death, and commune with him; and that it was never designed to express Christian intercommunion and fellowship. It was never in-

tended to be a symbol of "the communion of the saints."

4. That the Lord's Supper, being a positive or statutory institution of Christ, is to be observed according to the order which he has prescribed, and which the apostles practised; and that this order plainly is, first, Discipleship, second, Baptism, third, Breaking of bread.

5. That we are to deem nothing unimportant or unessential which Jesus commands. If he has placed the baptistery in front of the table, we have no right to build a bridge over it, or to pass round it with dry feet.

6. That the servants of Christ have no right to consult their own preferences or affections instead of their Master's instructions, in issuing invitations to his table. The guests there are to be only such as he describes and invites.

We will go as far to promote Christian union and to express Christian fellowship with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, as any Christian people will go—as far as truth and conscience will permit. We will strive to take

—what dear brethren we exhort you all to take —the revealed word of God as the only law for Christians. There can be no true union except upon that platform. So far as we adopt its teachings and practise them, we *are* one. Whoever diverges from these is responsible just so far for disunion from those who conscientiously cling to them. The sheep that stray from the enclosed fold of the Good Shepherd, or who refuse to enter by the door, are the separatists, not those who enter and remain in that fold.

"Other sheep" Jesus may have who "are not of this fold," but he will bring them, and there shall ultimately "be one fold and one Shepherd." Christians will be more closely united when they come, as they will come, to apprehend that "there is one body, one spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, through all, and in you all."

THE END.

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